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IN THE RHÔNE COUNTRY





On the Rhone between Vienne & Valence .
From a drawing by Mrs. Charles Kingsley, 1842.

IN THE RHÔNE COUNTRY

BY

ROSE G. KINGSLEY

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AND OTHERS," "ROSES AND ROSE-GROWING," ETC.

WITH 67 ILLUSTRATIONS

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P R E F A C E

THESE everyday impressions of a leisurely six weeks' journey down the Rhône from Lyons—founded on letters to my sister, and many notes made on the spot—are not intended in any sense to form a "guide-book" to this beautiful and interesting region. But at the same time I have endeavoured in this record of happy days, to make all the information it contains as accurate as possible, in the hope that it may be of use to others who may visit the ancient cities, the splendid monuments, the fine scenery of this comparatively neglected part of France, and enjoy among them as inspiring and charming a holiday as was mine last year.

Among the books to which I owe much, are Mr. D. MacGibbon's "Architecture of Provence and the Riviera"; M. Robida's volume on Provence in his work on "La Vieille France"; Prosper Mérimée's "Rapport sur les Monuments du Midi de la France"; Murray and

■

Baedeker's admirable guide-books; the exhaustive and learned "Guide Joanne"; and above all Viollet le Duc's monumental "Dictionary of French Architecture."

While my grateful thanks are due to my friend Professor Charles H. Moore, who has kindly looked over all the portions of my work which bear on the architecture of Dauphiné and Provence; and to Mr. Henry James, who has allowed me to make a quotation on p. 243 from his delightful "Italian Hours."¹

ROSE G. KINGSLEY.

KEYS, EVERSLEY,

September 21, 1910.

¹ *Italian Hours*, by Henry James. Illustrated by Joseph Pennell. London, William Heinemann, 25ss net.

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IN THE RHÔNE COUNTRY

CHAPTER I

THE RHÔNE, LYONS, AND FOURVIÈRES

WE had watched the Rhône pour its turbid and glacial flood, beneath the ever-whirling wailing cloud of white *mouettes*, into the Lake of Geneva, to be there engulfed and purified in those translucent waters. We had watched its rapid flow, clear as blue-green crystal, while it hastened away through the bridges of Geneva on its southern journey to the far off Mediterranean. And a great desire arose in my heart to fulfil the hope of long years, and follow to where the noble river led with such stately and triumphant eagerness—to follow it to that southern land of romance and poetry, of vine and corn and olive, of Roman temples and amphitheatres, of Romanesque churches and papal palaces, of

mediæval troubadours and Courts of Love, and the *Félibres* of to-day.

And thus it came to pass that on a hot evening last August, we found ourselves crossing the Rhône once more as the express from Ambérieu ran into Lyons.

Of the twenty-four hours that intervened between leaving the Rhône at Geneva and finding it again in the second city of France, the less said the better. My intention had been to spend a few days at Annecy, tracing out the blessed footsteps of St. François de Sales and Mme. de Chantal; reviving memories, some perhaps better forgotten, of Jean Jacques Rousseau; following André Theuriet's heroes and heroines in their wanderings about Tailloires and Duingt, the Combe d'Entrevignes and all the wooded mountains that surround its charming little lake. Alas, for pre-arranged plans! One night of horror and misery from smells, dirt, and evil food in the Grand Hôtel d'Angleterre, was enough to make me fly by the first express next morning to some place where friends and a good doctor would be at hand, in case that night at Annecy should result in serious illness. Both were to be found in Lyons (though happily the latter was not needed). So to Lyons I

hastened; and the apparent misfortune turned out a blessing, as it gave me an extra week in my land of promise.

There were no pre-arranged plans here. Except for the fact that I had always wished to visit some of the great rose-growers, Lyons was as unknown a land to me as Central Africa, my only recollections of it being a roar, a rush, and a momentary halt on winter nights in a vast station, as one woke and turned uneasily in the "sleeper" of the Marseilles train. I was even ignorant of the hotel I should go to, and picked out the names of two that seemed promising in the P.L.M. list. So when the porter asked my destination and shrugged his shoulders with polite deprecation when I mentioned the first, I promptly corrected myself saying "Grand Nouvel Hôtel." And as the pale blue omnibus and fat brown horses landed us at the door, and the civil personnel in pale blue liveries welcomed us, I found that fortune meant to favour me. For it is a most admirable and quiet hotel in the heart of the city, moderate in price, with excellent food, and the best plain French cooking, not messed up with rich and doubtful sauces which only serve to cover a multitude of sins.

LYONS, *Aug.* 25.

It was pleasant to wake after a solid eight hours' sleep in a clean, quiet room, after the horrors of the previous night at Annecy; and somewhat surprising to remember that one was in the heart of Lyons. There is always an agreeable touch of adventure in the first sight of a place about which one knows nothing save from books, an eagerness for the first impression, with slight trepidation lest it should disappoint one too deeply. Therefore while I dressed I wondered greatly just where I might be in the second city of France. Where was the Rhône? Where, still more, was Fourvières? And as soon as I was sufficiently clad not to shock the susceptibilities of the book-binder working at a fourth storey window of the hugely high houses on the opposite side of the street, I flung jalousies and big window open, and craning my head out, lo! both questions were answered instantly. For as I looked to the right, there was the Rhône racing past fifty yards away at the end of the street, beyond the plane trees along the quays. When I turned to the left, a great grey mass rising high into the sky half a mile off, filled the misty vista of the street, dominating all

the lofty buildings of the city. And I felt in a moment this could be nothing else than Fourvières on its 300 ft. cliff the other side of the Saône; and further, that Lyons was not going to be a disappointment.

I always think it is a good plan in a new place to make a reconnaissance first of all by means of the ordinary cab, in order to get some slight notion of the points of the compass. And Lyons among other merits abounds in excellent carriages in which you may go as fast as you like at 2 frs. an hour in the ordinary fiacre, or 2.50 frs. in one from a remise. Therefore, taking S. with me after breakfast, I quickly delivered myself over to the civil driver of a luxurious little victoria with a good black horse from the remise, and told him to give me some idea of the city.

Our way led us first to the Saône and its superb quays, with triple lines of plane trees on the wide raised pavements above them upon which a market is held in the early morning—and in places they were still heaped with thousands of pears, and hundreds of melons. The great mass of houses of Croix-Rousse, the quartier of the silk-weavers, was piled up high, a mountain of masonry, at the north where the

Saône makes a bend to the west. While across the river the stupendous height of Fourvières, cliff, buildings, trees, gardens, walls, crowned with the great basilica, rose behind the heavy classic peristyle of Balthard's Palais de Justice and the beautiful Cathedral of St. Jean.

But I clamoured for the Rhône, the river of my choice. So by way of narrow tortuous streets, with houses of five, six, and seven stories, we emerged on the Place des Terreaux, and drove past the Museum, the Hôtel de Ville, the Bourse, and the ancient Church of the Cordeliers where the chief network of tram lines meet, to the quays of the Rhône united by one fine bridge after another spanning the turbulent river both up and down. Driving half a mile down them—past tempting old book and curiosity shops in the basements of many of the lofty houses—we made our way home by the handsome Place de Bellecour, and the rue and Place de la République where poor President Carnot's statue stands on the spot upon which he was assassinated. And one began to understand how the city proper, with the hill of La Croix Rousse at the north, is a narrow tongue of land running south between the two great rivers which meet at its extreme southern end, the calmer Saône

being that mainly used for water traffic. The eastern bank of the Rhône is a striking contrast to the rocky heights that run close to the west bank of the Saône—being perfectly flat, the beginning of the rich plain that only ends at the foot of the Alps of Dauphiné 40 to 50 miles away to the east. And here lie the two vast and principal modern faubourgs of the city; the aristocratic quartier of les Brotteaux, joining the parc de la Tête d'Or, one of the most charming public parks in France; and the populous and busy La Guillotière, with the Prefecture, the fine University, and huge barracks.

Notre Dame de Fourvières, to which I went up in the afternoon by the funiculaire through the solid rock of the cliff behind the Cathedral, is really a wonderful spot.

For some hundreds of years it has been a pilgrimage place on account of the famous little black figure of the Blessed Virgin, to which in 1643 the deliverance of Lyons from the plague was ascribed; and the vow of devotion of the Echevins of the city is still celebrated annually on Sept. 8, the feast of the Nativity of Our Lady. During the Franco-Prussian War, the clergy of Lyons once again implored the intercession of the Blessed Virgin to deliver the city

from the invaders, and vowed to build a great and splendid church in her honour beside the little old chapel on the hill of Fourvières. That the city was delivered is common knowledge ; for three times the Prussians tried to get there, and three times they failed.

The great new basilica which stands at the edge of the cliff, 300 ft. above the river, was begun in 1888 from plans by Bossan, and consecrated in 1906. It is built in a sort of ornate Modern Byzantine style. Its decoration, gorgeous beyond description with richest marbles, mosaics, carvings, is quite bewildering at first sight. And the two vows, that of the plague in 1643, and of the war in 1870, are represented in sculpture by Dufresne on the tympanum of the façade. But far more touching than all the splendour of the basilica is the little old pilgrimage chapel at its side—so dark as one enters that it is scarcely possible at first to make out the miraculous black Virgin above the High Altar ; and crowded from dawn to dark with the kneeling devout, old men, young soldiers, priests and peasants, women and children. And it is only when one's eye gets accustomed to the dimness, one discovers by the many trembling, quivering taper flames that the walls are simply covered

with ex votos and the shrines completely framed in offerings of golden hearts.

The view from the great terrace outside the Church, and still more from the N.E. tower of the Choir which is some 140 ft. high, is magnificent on a clear day. All Lyons with its two great rivers lies below ; the Jura, Mont Blanc itself, and the chain of the Alps of Savoy and Dauphiné from les Bauges to le Mont Pelvoux, are in view, with the Cevennes, the Mountains of the Vivarais, and Mont du Pilat in the south. But I saw none of these distant wonders ; for a heavy thunderstorm was coming on veiling all the land in leaden smoke. And the heat was so intensely oppressive, that we were thankful to hasten down, and take refuge at Moyne's in the Place de la République where "tout Lyon" congregates in the afternoon, for there the best tea, iced coffee, and ices I know in France are to be found.

CHAPTER II

LYONS: THE CATHEDRAL—CHURCH AND STATE

Aug. 29.

My future plan of campaign is decided. Mlle. Thérèse I. came in to luncheon yesterday from her mother's country place at St. Didier du Mont d'Or; and, as she had promised she would do when we parted six weeks ago in Paris, she thoroughly discussed with me the pros and cons of my future route. I had rather wished to explore the Alps of Dauphiné from Grenoble to Briançon, as well as the Rhône Valley. But "qui trop embrasse mal étreint"; and nothing is more unprofitable to the leisurely traveller than trying to see too much. Mlle. Thérèse, who knows every inch of the country, told me that although the tour in Dauphiné would be superb as to scenery, it would mean constant excursions—a form of enjoyment that appeals but moderately to my tastes; and moreover that this was "le bon moment" for going down the

Rhône Valley, as it would not be too hot.¹ Having seen a fair share of mountains in my day, both east and west, in the old and in the new world, I feel more drawn to Roman and Mediæval cities, to Provençal poets and French novelists, than to what Poppy St. John would unkindly describe as "overpowering, heartless, raw-boned nature." So, "Va! pour les grandes villes du passé," strung like jewels along the course of the noble river!

After settling this weighty matter we had a most interesting talk on the present position of affairs here as regards the Church. There seems to be a sort of *acalmie* just now. Matters are going fairly well between Church and State in Lyons, as the municipality is fairly well disposed towards the clergy. But how long this may last no one can tell.

I asked her about the nuns, who I see in considerable numbers about the city. And it appears that the Sisters of Charity are undisturbed here and still have charge of all the hospitals; though all teaching orders are dispossessed of their schools as in the rest of France. A most picturesque element are these good Sisters, as they trot along

¹ In this she was mistaken—for, as it turned out, the heat was unusually intense all through September.

the crowded streets in their winged caps and white flannel habit with a Red Cross brassard on the left arm. The central Pharmacy being close to this hotel, I see plenty of them from the windows going and coming for their medicaments.

After luncheon we drove to the famous Abbey Church of St. Martin d'Ainay, beyond the Place Bellecour. (By the way there is the most delightful of book-shops on the right-hand side of that handsome square, to which all roads seem to lead, for I generally find myself looking through the tempting shelves of books new and old before each day is over.) But it was too early to gain admittance to St. Martin, as the church is closed from 1 to 2. So we went on to the Cathedral across the Saône, and were in time to see the famous clock in the north transept, made by Lippius of Bale in 1508, strike the hour—a quaint and rather irreverent sight as the sacred figures appear.

The Cathedral of St. Jean Baptiste is typical of the singular mixture of styles in the region. The Choir is Romanesque of the 12th century, with no aisle round the apse. The arcades of the gallery round the Choir are trefoiled arches on fluted pilasters in which the Roman tradition

survives. And a curious frieze of white marble incrustated with red designs taken from the antique, runs round the apse. This use of coloured marble or stone incrustations is very general throughout the south, especially in Auvergne, Dauphiné, and Provence. The main body of the Cathedral is Burgundian Gothic of the 13th and 14th centuries : but as Mr. MacGibbon¹ points out, the vaulting of the nave is "sexpartite, a form entirely abandoned in the north at that time."

The Bourbon Chapel built by Cardinal de Bourbon, and his brother Pierre, son-in-law of Louis XI., is extremely interesting on account of the rich and exquisite carving of flowers and foliage, especially of the thistle or "chardon," which is introduced everywhere in leaf and flower. This is a pun in sculpture, alluding to the *cher-don* of the king's gift of his daughter's hand ; and I am entirely at one with Prosper Mérimée, who incisively remarks "Le calembourg est détestable, mais la ciselure est merveilleuse."

The 14th century west front with its three portals and fine rose window, reminds one of many of the northern Cathedrals in its design and beautiful carving : but it has an exotic touch

"Architecture of Provence and the Riviera." David MacGibbon, 1888.

about it which jars a little after the Romanesque choir.

This is not the case with the curious Manécanterie, or house of the chanters, which adjoins it. Its façade is of a much earlier date, indeed some consider it to be of the 11th century and contemporary with St. Martin d'Ainay: but though sadly mutilated by the Huguenots in the wars of religion, one can still distinguish its interesting Romanesque arcadings and incrustations.

High Mass to-day at the Cathedral was deeply impressive; and left one rather sad at heart when one thought of the strange position of the clergy—deprived now of all save the mere right of officiating; and this sadness deepened after witnessing a little incident outside. The trams start just opposite the gates of the vast courtyard of the old Archevêché which joins the Cathedral. And I wondered why the open tram I had entered should delay its usually hurried departure, while at the same time a thick line of men and women gathered from the roadway up to the iron gates. We were all evidently waiting for some one. Then in the far corner of the vast *cour d'honneur* I caught a glimpse of scarlet and white entering a quiet black brougham; and as this neared the gates every man's hat went off and every woman

curtseyed low ; for it was the venerable Cardinal Archbishop of Lyons himself, who let down the glass and blessed the waiting throng, and as he passed gave us in the waiting tram the same benediction. It was infinitely touching. And as a friend said to me afterwards, "You see that even tram drivers have souls and sympathies!"

Mlle. Thérèse I. told me that the Archbishop was given the option of buying the Archevêché when the State seized it. But he refused, not wishing to spend the money of the Church in this way. And now the State is trying to let the building : but in vain—as no one will take it. Meanwhile some devout person has placed a house at his disposal some little way from the Cathedral ; and as the tram crossed the bridge we watched the black brougham and its black horse disappearing down the broad quays to this refuge.

And here let me say once and for all that this little journey has given the lie to all that one is so glibly and ignorantly told of the decay of faith in France, and the emptiness of French churches.

One is assured over and over again in England and elsewhere, sometimes with a sigh, sometimes

with hardly veiled satisfaction, that in France since the troubles of 1903, the churches are absolutely deserted save by a few women. That no man ever sets foot in them. Nay, more, that the wives of all officials do not dare to be seen in church for fear of compromising their husbands' position.

As my pleasure as well as my interest has led me day after day into churches great and small, whether for the purpose of studying their architecture, or for precious and restful moments of meditation in the busy day, be it Sunday or week-day one finds that the church is never empty. Man or woman, it matters not which, is always there before one. And on Sundays there is a constant stream of worshippers from earliest Mass to evening Benediction; young men and old; private soldiers in blue and red; solid bourgeois who take their appointed seats within the sanctuary at High Mass; lads who stand quietly in the aisles and kneel devoutly on the pavement at the elevation; throngs of women, old and young, rich and poor. So that at High Mass one has to be in good time if one desires to get a seat near the front of the congregation.

One exception only did I find, and that was in Avignon at High Mass on Sunday in Notre

Dame des Doms. But as I have explained elsewhere, the Cathedral there is looked on more as a show-place than a church, and the Avignonnais go to their parish churches in preference—these being always crowded.

In the afternoon I took a charming drive with S. to the junction of the two rivers. Our way led down the quays of the Rhône past Soufflot's façade of the huge Hôtel Dieu—one of the most ancient hospitals in Europe; for it was founded in the 6th century by Childebert and Ultrogothe his queen. Beyond the railway bridge of Perache the city gradually melted away into "terrains vagues," goods stations, waterways for merchandise. The plane trees along the river gave place to the far more picturesque Lombardy poplar. On the further bank a suggestion of country appeared below La Guillotière. And presently we found ourselves struggling with trams, which had raced past us along the quays, for possession of half the roadway of a long bridge only divided by a railing from the trains which ran along the other half, as we crossed the Saône. The river broadened out below into a wide, still pool; and a quarter of a mile beyond, its quieter waters mingled with the turbulent eager current of the Rhône.

The way back was very picturesque by La Mulatière under St. Foy, and onwards below the high cliffs on the right bank of the Saône covered with fine houses, terraced gardens and verdure, above which at times as they receded, one got a glimpse of great forts and barracks, hospitals and convents on the heights of St. Just and St. Irenée—where Caligula was born and St. Irenée was martyred. Endless fishermen sat with rod and line in quaint flat-bottomed, sharp-nosed little boats, or along the edge of barges and landing stages. And now one got some notion of the immense river traffic from the north and from the south, which meets in this great emporium, Lyons. For the east bank across the Saône seemed one vast port; hundreds of wine barrels, with merchandise of every description, lay on the wide quays; scores of barges were crowded beside them, with the ugly little paddle-wheel river steamers, whose funnels lay back flat above the deck like the ears of a kicking donkey. As I watched them, I pictured that three days' journey of "Le Petit Chose"¹ and his family coming up on one of them from sunny Beaucaire, and the miserable arrival in foggy, smoky Lyons, till I could almost hear the tragic cries of

¹ "Le Petit Chose," by Alphonse Daudet.

"Robinson, Robinson," from the hitherto silent parrot, left behind on board in the confusion and darkness of the landing.

I was to come upon further reminiscences of "Le Petit Chose" to-day. For late in the afternoon while prowling up the rue de l'Hôtel de Ville, I found myself by chance at St. Nizier, where he went to the school of the Manécanterie, and served the altar, and tumbled down on the altar steps with the big *pupitre* and the Gospel book, and wore a black *soutane* with a long tail, like those of the servers at the Cathedral this morning. These among other details of Church service are, I believe, peculiar to Lyons; and the effect of the long black tails trailing behind under the white surplices is quaint in the extreme.

Apart from recollections of "Le Petit Chose," the Church of St. Nizier is an interesting example of 15th century Gothic, built on the foundations of a Romanesque basilica. The lofty flamboyant vaulted roof of the nave and apse, and the graceful triforium with sculptured pediments and balustrade, are singularly attractive. In its own way the 16th century Renaissance porch built by Philibert de l'Orme, is fine, though wholly out of keeping with the Gothic doors and sharply

pointed *flèches* of the façade on either side. But however incongruous the building may be as a whole, that supersensitive critic Prosper Mérimée could say of it that, with the Cathedral, it was "le plus intéressant monument gothique que j'ai vue à Lyon."



ON THE SÂONE. LYONS



FOURVIÈRES AND THE CATHEDRAL. LYONS

CHAPTER III

ST. MARTIN D'AINAY

A BETTER starting-point than Lyons could hardly be found, from which to begin a leisurely investigation of that strange blending of Roman with Christian Architecture which is found in Dauphiné and Provence, and of the gradual development of the southern Romanesque style as the outcome of that blending. The influence of Imperial Rome was too mighty a matter to be swept away by Barbarian, Burgundian, or Saracen, in those centuries when southern Gaul lay waste under their incursions from north and south. The earliest Romanesque builders were so imbued with the inherited Classic ideal, so accustomed to its visible presence in the magnificent monuments around them, that it was as living a force to the builders of the early middle ages in Dauphiné and Provence, as it is to-day to the moderns of the Drôme, the Var, Vaucluse and Bouches du Rhône.

It is not a classic renaissance that we find in

southern Architecture, as we do in other parts of France, for the simple reason that there the Classic ideal had never died and therefore needed no new birth. It lived on in the fulness of its strength in the great Romanesque period, till it even laid its dominating hand on the northern Gothic, which invaded the whole of France from l'Île de France when the kingdom was centralized in the Royal Domain. And while it accepted the new style which had developed in the north—a logical growth from Romanesque—the south moulded it to its own uses and impulses; until in many a noble cathedral and church we find Gothic pillars crowned with Corinthianesque capitals, the structure of the Roman basilica with pointed arches and delicately traced windows.

I frankly confess that beautiful as many of the Gothic Cathedrals are in the south, the Romanesque has to me a much greater charm. It appeals far more strongly to the imagination, because it is indigenous and therefore more sympathetic and in keeping with the country; while the Gothic seems—as it was—an exotic importation which never looks quite at home.

How captivating, how impressive the southern Romanesque can be—a style quite distinct let

us remember from northern Romanesque and Norman—it is not possible to apprehend worthily from any amount of books, or plans, or drawings. One must see it for oneself to realize its beauty, its dignified charm, its absolute appropriateness to the country of violent sun and violent wind—where the fortress-like church is indeed the shadow of a great rock, refuge alike from heat and storm and the enemy. And the first example, which we find in Lyons, is not only one of the most ancient but one of the most remarkable churches of this style; and is therefore a fitting introduction to the more magnificent series we see as we go further south. For round the little Church of St. Martin d'Ainay cluster the earliest traditions and facts concerning Christianity in Roman Gaul.

The present church—or rather part of it—is known to have been standing in A.D. 937. But this rests upon foundations of far more ancient buildings. For in the 1st century it was close to this spot that the Rhône and Saône joined, instead, as they do now, some miles further down; and the four plain round granite pillars, enormous monoliths, which now support the low flat tower in the centre of the church, are

supposed, and justly it would seem, to be those of the altar erected at the confluence of the rivers by the sixty nations of Gaul, in honour of Augustus who spent three years in Lugdunum. It was also on this same spot that Caligula, who was born up above at Fourvières, founded his famous and alarming Athenæum, a school of rhetoric whose rules, as Juvenal says, were so severe that the defeated pleaders were liable to be beaten, thrown into the river, or made to lick out their own composition with their tongues; and until the middle ages Ainay was known as Athenacum.

But the succeeding stage in the history of Ainay is of far more intense interest. For it brings us into close touch with the Apostles; St. Pothinus, an Asiatic Greek and the first bishop of Lyons, being actually a disciple of the Apostles of our Lord. In the Roman dungeon below the present church, St. Pothinus, "who was past his ninetieth year, and very infirm in body," and the blessed Blandina, a slave, were confined before their hideous martyrdom in A.D. 177. And here St. Pothinus died two days later; while Blandina, after torture unmentionable, was at last thrown to the wild beasts in the Amphitheatre. This took place

during the "great persecution" between A.D. 160 and 180 under Marcus Antoninus, the most bitter enemy of Christianity, and is recorded in the famous Epistle of "The Servants of Christ dwelling in Lyons and Vienne, in Gaul, to those brethren in Asia and Phrygia, having the same faith and hope with us," which Eusebius gives in full. And very grisly reading it is.

It is with strange and solemn feelings that one creeps down the steps of the ancient and now restored Chapel of St. Blandina, and looks through the grating into the darkness of that tiny and evil hole of Roman masonry, where the blessed Pothinus died, bringing one nearer than one has ever been before to a martyr who learnt from the lips of the Holy Apostles.

No wonder that in early days this sacred spot became the site of a monastery—the Abbey Church being founded in the 6th century. The crypt of the present church is of the 9th century; and as I have said part of the present building was known to be standing in 937. But the main portion of the church as it exists belongs really to the 11th century, its consecration taking place in the early years of the 12th, about 1107. It is an admirable type of the local style of which we shall see so many examples on our journey down

the Rhône. Its form is the Roman basilica, with a central nave and two aisles: and two outer aisles were added in the 12th or 13th century. The original nave and two aisles have barrel roofs and end in apses with no ambulatory, the central apse being round on the outside, while those at each side are scooped out of a flat wall. The square lantern over the crossing before the sanctuary, forming a squat tower without and a cupola within, is also peculiar to this country; and is supported by the four grey, massive, round pillars of Augustus' altar.

The round arches and flat fluted pilasters of the central apse are fine imitations of classic work: and the capitals of the round arches dividing the north and south aisles from the centre are decorated with figures of an early Byzantine type. While the flat fluted pilasters on the original outer walls, now separating the north and south aisles from the outer ones of the 12th century, have capitals of Roman designs of leaves and flowers. On the pilasters of the apse ending the northern aisle I found a singular pattern which was quite new to me, and which I only once found again in the Cathedral at Vienne, the flat surface being covered with what I can only describe as square smocking or

honeycomb work in stone. An ancient painting of figures on a gold ground decorates the low domed roof of the central tower. And this same style of decoration was effectively revived in the apses by Hippolyte Flandrin, with fine designs of Christ and the saints also on gold grounds.

The western façade of the little church, standing in its quiet "place" of lofty houses, is singularly interesting. The three pointed doorways are a modern reproduction of those added in the 12th century. Above them comes a range of Romanesque windows, a group of three over the central, and one over each of the side doors. Over these, the singular square tower, which some have thought to be Carolingian, rises above the slightly sloped roofs of the aisles with two stages of Romanesque arcades, and ends in a low steeple with a pointed, ear-like acrotère at each corner of the cornice; the effect of this is most curious. Inlaid figures of rude animals of Byzantine design, reminding one of Scandinavian or Saxon decorations, which are of course debased Byzantine, are introduced in a frieze under the moulded string course below the upper group of arcades, with a large cross of round and square red lozenges. And similar red stone or marble incrustations are also to be seen on the rounded

west ends of the chapels of the low outer aisles ; such incrustations of red and coloured stones being fairly common in this district in many of the churches, notably round the apse of the Cathedral ; and again in the Cathedral of Vienne.

The interest of the Abbey Church of Ainay was absorbing. And I had worked so hard at notes that I took a lazy afternoon off, and drove with S. up the quays of the Brotteaux with their handsome seven-storied houses to the beautiful Park, to get a complete change of mind from Roman Emperors and Christian Martyrs. The Park of the Tête d'Or with its lake, its shady drives, and pretty children feeding a big herd of Fallow deer through the fence of the central enclosure, proved an excellent antidote. We wandered through palm houses reminding us of Kew ; and inspected the admirable Botanic garden, where gigantic Zinnias five inches across made a brave show beside *Salvia farinacea* and *Datura fastuosa*, while a bed of *Torenia Fournieri* produced a charming effect. Then we fed large Moufflons and Nilgaus, and other beautiful beasts and birds with rolls ; watched several huge and loathly alligators sunning themselves ; and ended up by shying bits of a particularly hard and nasty bun (which the old vendor



ST. MARTIN D'AINAY. LYONS

assured me was their favourite tippie) into the open mouths of two entirely delightful *ours Martin*—two of the biggest and best brown bears of my acquaintance. It was most refreshing ; and thanks to a steady course of rifle practice, our shots were so successful as to bring applause from the kindly and much amused crowd.

CHAPTER IV

ROSES AND ROSE-GROWERS

ONE of my first cares in this magnificent city was to send a note to one of the chief rose-growers of my acquaintance. For though to the ordinary mortal the name "Lyons" stands for silks only, to the rosarian it means roses. Indeed it may well be called "the home of roses," scores of the most celebrated of our glorious modern varieties having been raised by its world-famous horticulturists.

For many years I have corresponded with M. Bernaix and his late father, the well-known rose-growers of Villeurbanne-Lyon, one of the recently incorporated suburbs of the great city ; and as a humble rosarian I have long promised myself the delight of a visit to his nurseries if ever I came to Lyons. So the next morning my early breakfast was agreeably interrupted by a charming emissary, Mademoiselle D., who came to bid me welcome and to answer my letter by word of

mouth, and my inquiries as to where Villeurbanne was and how to get to it.

The same afternoon therefore, we took one of the many excellent electric trams which abound in the city, from the Place des Cordeliers to Bon Coin, crossing the Rhône with its quays shaded by plane trees by the Pont Lafayette, and up the long Cours Lafayette shaded with yet more planes which separates the quarters of les Brotteaux and La Guillotière. Passing fine old houses with walled gardens and handsome iron gates, now turned into *usines*, and little shops savouring of a provincial townlet, we reached the very outskirts of the city and were landed at the Church of Villeurbanne, whence another tram took us in five minutes to Bon Coin. At the end of the line a few steps along the rue Emile Decorps took us to M. Bernaix's house, where two amusing little black and white pie-dogs and a black poodle greeted us effusively—the former with loud barkings as we came through the grille in the high wall, the poodle with an old slipper in his mouth, which he seemed to think a mark of the highest distinction.

Mademoiselle D. then led the way along a country road through flat open fields, the beginning of the great plain that stretches east from

Lyons till it ends fifty miles away at the foot of the Dauphiné Alps, whose snows gleamed white above Grenoble in the misty distance, a cooling vision in the blazing sun. And soon a dazzling row of *Beauté Inconstante* beyond a strong wooden fence told us we had reached the chief nursery. Here M. Bernaix met us, and we were at once deep in the beauties of his collection.

My first desire, naturally, was to see the famous *Lyon Rose*, which hitherto I had only beheld in 1st prize boxes at the Nat. Rose Society's Show the day before I left London. And a plantation some 50 yards long by 4 or 5 yards broad of sturdy well-grown plants covered with glorious flowers even at this worst moment for roses, the *mi-saison* between the summer and autumn bloom, was a sight that of itself would have repaid a long journey. I will return to this queen of roses when I reach its home and its inventor: but what I saw of it here, convinced me that *Lyon Rose* will soon take as high a place among garden as it has already among exhibition roses; for I was assured not only by M. Bernaix but by its famous creator M. Pernet himself, that it is never out of flower, and is remarkably vigorous in constitution.

Although, as he told me, M. Bernaix's regular

business is that of a grower and exporter of roses, he amuses himself occasionally, as his father did, by hybridisation, and has raised many valuable roses thereby, such as the delightful *M. Tillier*, which is so little known in England that the plants in my garden at home create immense interest among all my visitors. The new roses of his own raising were therefore of special interest to me. And his novelties for 1909-10 ought to come quickly into favour, for they are both vigorous hybrid-teas, and very fragrant—*Berthe Gaulis*, a large egg-shaped flower of rich rose-pink, and *Principal A. H. Pirie* with very double blooms, the outer petals silvery salmon-pink shading in the centre to deep cochineal-pink. The hybrid-teas of 1908 are *Mlle Marie Mascuraud*, almost white with a salmon centre; and the singular and charming *Lady Dartmouth*, a flower of medium size, the base of the petals bright yellow outside, pale pink inside, with deep carmine edges. It is a most attractive and decorative novelty, fragrant, and lasting well in water. But to my mind the most beautiful of all M. Bernaix's new roses is *Mrs Harvey Thomas* which he brought out in 1906. It seems to have been curiously overlooked in England, as I can only find it mentioned in the catalogues of

Messrs Wm. Paul & Sons, and Mr Perkins of Coventry. Very large, full, and deliciously fragrant, this grand flower is an intense rose-pink on a yellow base, glowing with coppery red in the centre.

It was an interesting hour that we spent wandering through the nurseries among thousands of glorious roses—some of which I hardly recognised at first, so vivid were their colours in their own home compared with those I had left under the sunless skies in England of this summer—and discussing their merits and their idiosyncrasies with M. Bernaix, while he filled our hands to overflowing with their exquisite blossoms. And as we bade him farewell among his roses he urged me to go the next day, with Mademoiselle for our guide, to see the world-famous nurseries of Pernet-Ducher, the home of *Soleil d'Or* and *Lyon Rose* and all the countless wonders that have been raised at Vennissieux. So while we sat with Mademoiselle in the office and drank welcome cups of tea, and ate delicious little sugar-cakes shaped like dainty mushrooms—which the black and white dogs shared so greedily that I was told they were both ill in the night—we settled to start on the morrow at two upon this fresh pilgrimage.

Happy it was for us that charming Mademoiselle was willing to conduct us; for most surely we should never have found our way alone to that distant shrine. An electric tram from the Place Bellecour carried us swiftly miles and miles south-eastwards, along a broad highroad out into the country, past vineyards where ripening grapes hung on trellised vines, and through wide open fields where "*la récolte des pommes de terre*" in full swing reminded one vividly of poor Bastien Lepage's famous picture. It landed us after an hour in the fly-bepested, dusty little square of Vennissieux, a typical French country village of the better sort, with its church, its Mairie, and its principal "*hôtel*" before which an omnibus, a hearse, and an ancient carriage all stood without horses. Thence a walk of half a mile along a dusty road, with quinces hanging over every tile-topped wall, and pie-dogs of richly various breeding infesting our steps, led us to our Mecca, the house and high-walled gardens of "*Pernet-Ducher*." And presently M. Pernet himself, a very prince among men, came with kind and courtly greeting into his dining-room which is all decorated with cups and medals and hung with plates of his famous roses, his blue apron with its pocket full of raffia showing that even now he

was working fresh spells to add to his triumphs. As we followed him into the gardens outside, the matchless colour of hundreds of *Lyon Rose* greeted us in all directions—the colour that has been variously described as “shrimp pink and coral red, with salmon and chrome yellow shading,” or “salmon-pink, suffused yellow.” But even this, perhaps the greatest of all known roses, was forgotten for the moment in the startling vision of a sheet of purest brightest yellow close before me. Here was the exact colour of *Persian Yellow* seen in a great hybrid-tea rose, a yellow holding its own even in the burning rays of the August sun.

“Marvel of all marvels! what have you here, Monsieur?” I cried in amazement. “Voici la rose jaune que nous attendons depuis vingt ans!” “C’est vrai,” was the proud, quiet answer. “*Rayon d’Or* is without doubt the best yellow rose in existence.”

This remarkable rose, the result of patient years of hybridisation, is one of the same family which M. Pernet created—the Pernetiana roses—a cross between the humble little favourite of every cottage garden in Hampshire, the double *Persian Yellow Briar* and a hybrid-tea, of which *Soleil d’Or* was the first and *Lyon Rose* up till

now the most famous offspring. There were other seedlings of the same family ; *Viscountess Enfield*, rather lighter in colour than *Lyon Rose*, and a beautiful unnamed yellow seedling. There were also other hybrid-tea seedlings of great beauty—one among them something like *Marquise de Sinéty*—but M. Pernet considered it a decidedly better rose ; and this great wizard in horticulture certainly ought to know if any one does which is the best of his two enchanting productions.

Close to these seedlings, which of course were of absorbing interest, was a great mass of his grand crimson-carmine *Laurent Carle* in full beauty ; and this let it be remembered was 27th August ; so were his beautiful *Mme Maurice de Luze*, *Château de Clos Vougeot*, just the colour of the well-known wine, *Mlle Simone Beaumez*, *Mrs Aaron Ward* and *Renée Wilmart-Urbain*.

My hands were soon so full of these wonders and delights, all the more attractive because one saw them in their own home, that making notes became difficult. But among them all the one which I treasured most highly was a somewhat loose-petalled flower of orange-yellow and flame-pink, that I espied growing out of the open roof of the little forcing house where the great wizard works

his spells in secret. Its colour was so vivid and unusual that I asked what it could possibly be, as I was certain it was a rose I had never seen before. M. Pernet with his usual courteous kindness promptly gathered me a blossom when with unexampled boldness I followed him into the forcing house (for I was told few if any visitors had ever set foot in that sacred spot)—adding in answer to my eager enquiries that he did not sell it—"it was not sufficiently *rustique*."¹ And then came the exciting announcement that it was the pollen parent of both *Soleil d'Or* and *Lyon Rose*, the famous child of that original and secret cross between *Persian Yellow* and the hybrid tea which resulted in the Pernetiana family. And as I held the strangely beautiful and fragrant flower in my hand, the first of a new race, I no longer wondered that so fertile and precious a plant was not distributed to the world at large; for every great inventor surely has the right to keep the secret of his inventions for himself.

I had fully intended to go out the next day by another of the many trams to Montplaisir, which lies on a low hill between Vennissieux and Villeurbanne, to see M. Guillot's nurseries. But

¹ Hardy.

when I reached that suburb I found I had taken the wrong tram, and that the Chemin St Priest was too far away to reach on foot from the Grand-rue where I had landed at M. Schwartz's gardens. This was disappointing as it was my only chance. But in M. Schwartz's beautiful home-garden with its gay beds of begonias, cannas, salvias, and many other brilliant flowers below the terrace, and its trellised vines dividing plantations of roses beyond, I found enough to satisfy even my rosarian greed in the way of novelties. Here among the new roses of this well-known house for 1908, I made acquaintance with the silvery-rose and carmine *La Galissière*, *M. Emiliano Oliden*, *Mme Valerie Beaumez*, and *Princesse Vera Orbeloni*; the fine novelty *Mrs Edward Vicars*, and *Mme Pauline Bertnay*; and many others old and new, some of them unknown in England. While of course such well-known favourites as *Georges Schwartz* and the beautiful *Princesse Marie Mertchersky* were seen in perfection in their own home. But among the China roses—a class in which the house of Schwartz has always been interested—I found a rose quite new to me, though it was introduced in 1903—*M. Pétrus Donzel*. A rich deep velvety crimson, it was infinitely superior

both in colour and growth to the old *Cramoisié Supérieure*, and I wonder why it is not largely grown in England.

In the further nurseries a few hundred yards away to which M. André Schwartz kindly took us, I found two of his men busily engaged in budding dwarf seedling briars at the rate of four or five a minute. The front man at lightning speed made the regulation slit and cross slit in the stem, sliced the bud off the twig he held, shaped it and slipped it into the slit, while number two as quickly bound it into place with the coarse yarn which is exclusively used in France for budding. It was fascinating to watch them; and I managed from them and from kind M. Schwartz to get an excellent lesson in this part of the rosarian's business, in which I have hitherto, I grieve to say, been singularly unsuccessful. While besides handfuls of choice roses M. Schwartz presented me with a large ball of the yarn; so that really I ought to succeed when budding time next comes round.

N.B. When we returned to Lyons at the end of September, I found all the nurseries a sheet of blossom. While M. Bernaix's office was ablaze with a wonderful collection of bunches of the choicest varieties all named in separate jars,

ready for me to carry up to Paris next day. These were *Mrs Harvey Thomas*, *Berthe Gaulis*, *Lady Dartmouth*, *Principal A. H. Pirie*, *Mme Maurice de Luze*, *Mme Segond Wéber*, *Lyon Rose*, *Édu Meyer*, *Dorothy Page Roberts*, *Mrs Harold Brocklebank*, *George C. Waud*, *Laurent Carle*, and the incomparable *Rayon d'Or* for which M. Bernaix had sent a special messenger to Vennisieux—as perfect a collection of autumn roses as could well be found. That evening I had to go out and buy a big market basket to carry the huge and dazzling bouquet, whose delicious fragrance filled our carriage in the whirling train next day. And I shall not soon forget the kindness and courtesy of the famous rose-growers of Lyons.

CHAPTER V

THE PALAIS ST. PIERRE ET DES ARTS

Aug. 31.

I WALKED this morning by way of the broad and busy rue de la République to the Musée in the Place des Terreaux, which should be called Place des Terreurs. For not only were Cinq Mars and De Thou executed on it: but in 1794 the guillotine did such deadly work there that the great square ran in blood; and at last, to kill the quicker, the victims were herded across the Rhône to the Brotteaux and there shot down with mitraille amid horrors unspeakable. Now trams run round it instead. And from the façade of the fine Hôtel de Ville where Couthon, Collet d'Herbois, and Fouché sat and condemned their thousands of victims, Henri IV. smiles that sardonic smile of his as he looks down on Bartholdi's colossal lead fountain of *Les Fleuves et les Sources allant à l'Océan*, and on the hurrying multitudes of prosperous Lyons.

The whole southern side of the Place is filled by the huge Musée or Palais St. Pierre et des Beaux Arts, its arcaded central court gay with trees and flowers, fountains and statues, where the good Lyonnais bourgeois sits peacefully and reads his revolutionary or clerical newspaper, according to which party he belongs; for Lyons is either very republican or very devout.

The Hôtel de Ville, rebuilt in 1646 by Maupin, a Lyonnais, and restored after a fire by Mansart, is worthy of the great city, especially the older portion which opens on the Place de la Comédie, the two wings joined across a spacious court by semicircular arcades and open galleries, after the fashion of the Roi Soleil's reign.

The vast Museum, originally the Benedictine Convent of St. Pierre, was built in 1659; and the fine refectory on the ground floor is still well preserved and serves as part of the Museum of sculpture. But I confess I could not examine this fully; for as it was evident that no windows had been opened during the whole summer, the atmosphere was so congested with the accumulated heat of many hot weeks that after five minutes of suffocation I fled hastily for fear of fainting then and there, and took refuge in the

cool arcaded cloister round the garden. There was plenty to occupy one here. For the walls of the arcades all round the court are lined up to the very top with Roman altars, vases, urns, columns, sarcophagi, slabs wreathed with garlands of oak leaves and acorns, and inscriptions to those of Imperial Rome who flourished in the days when Caligula was born close to the site of Notre Dame de Fourvières up above. The collection of inscriptions—all local—is the finest in France; and thanks to the admirable lists of translations which hang against the pillars opposite each group, even a perfectly ignorant person is able to gain some insight into the constitution of ancient Lugdunum, its colleges and corporations, trade, and worship. But it would take months of study to get any approximate idea of the treasures of this great “Musée Lapidaire.” And my immediate desire was to worship at a more modern shrine than those of the worthies of Imperial Rome. So I wandered slowly up the great staircase, and at its head on the second floor I found what I sought—Puvis de Chavanne’s three noble decorative panels, “Vision Antique,” “Le Bois Sacré, cher aux Arts et aux Muses,” and “L’Inspiration Chrétienne.” Well as one knows

these from drawings and descriptions, their beauty and the deep sentiment running through them cannot be imagined until one sees them in the place for which they were designed. In the first the placid calm of soulless enjoyment—beautiful happy beings, content with the mere fact of existence in a happy and fruitful land—the flight of white riders against the edge of the tranquil blue sea and distant mountains suggesting the only movement in the composition. Then in the “Bois Sacré,” intellect disturbing that soulless calm and leading to higher ideals. While in “L’Inspiration Chrétienne” with its background of cypresses seen through Italian arcades, the soul has attained its highest development, and we watch Giotto painting the Great Renunciation—the Agony in the Garden. Here truly is “the thinker who paints.” The allegoric figures of “Le Rhône et La Saône” on the landing, worthily complete this noble decorative scheme that does such honour to the great artist’s native city. For Puvis de Chavannes was born at Lyons in 1824; and in the picture galleries of the first floor there are two more notable examples of his work; the exquisite and penetrating portrait all in black of his wife, *née* Princesse Cantacuzène, who bequeathed

the picture to the Museum in 1898; and "L'Automne," three stately half-draped nymphs gathering grapes before Pomona herself amid piled up masses of fruits—a scene that well symbolizes the wondrous fruit harvest of the Rhône valley.

Lyons has been the birthplace of many artists. The two Flandrins, Hippolyte and Auguste, are largely represented in the Museum as well as in some of the churches of the city. And the famous, but wholly ill-starred designs for the decoration of the Pantheon by Paul Chenavard, the "romantic," have found a resting place in his native city. Here too is his fine "Séance de Nuit de la Convention"; and a highly finished portrait in his usual moonlight colouring. While his own portrait painted by Meissonier, is a masterpiece of which Lyons may well be proud, one of that great painter's strongest and most sympathetic bits of work.

As I wandered round, I was closely escorted by a friendly old gardien who seemed enchanted to find any one to talk with who knew and cared a little about pictures; for the Musée is a spot sadly neglected by the good Lyonnais. I grieve to say that the ordinary picture gallery of the provincial Museum in France leaves me

cold ; as it is usually the Government's "glory hole" for pictures bought at the annual Salon which must be hung somewhere. Therefore it was in a somewhat condescending frame of mind that after looking at these rare specimens among a fair amount of the usual "dons de l'État," I yielded to the importunity of my old gardien and penetrated the further rooms. And there I made a discovery—a Lyons artist whose name, I will be bound, is hardly known outside his native city.

GROBIN. 1770-1853.

Delightful Monsieur Grobin, I salute you. You gave me half-an-hour of sincere enjoyment and entertainment.

A charming and thoughtful little portrait of a young woman in the dress of the revolutionary period, first caught my eye. The painting of the flesh and of the dark green dress, was delicious in its tender tones and delicate yet broad treatment. Here was something really distinct. A portrait of the artist by himself about 1825, was equally good. Then came a pretty cabinet picture of a "*Jeune élève préparant ses couleurs,*" and I became interested in my find ; while my amiable old gardien — a little surprised that

Grobin's fame was not world-wide—now pointed out more and more of his works; and among them a number of delightful pictures of Lyons in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The "Pigeonier de Rohecardon" in 1785; the "Quartier de la Pêcherie et l'ancien Pont du Change"; the "Grottes des Étroits"; and the "Cathédral et la Saône" 1818 (No. 529). This is particularly interesting. No bridge, over which incessant electric trams run, then existed; nor walled quays, for these were mainly built after the terrible flood of 1856, though the Romans had built quays in certain spots whose foundations still exist. But vineyards covered the slopes up to Fourvières; while the foreground was occupied by amusing groups of people, gentlemen in white ducks and blue tailcoats, peasants and vendors, and a gendarme with tricorné and high boots, all painted with breadth as well as minute care. So that the picture was not only interesting as a careful topographical record of the time, but as a work of considerable artistic merit.

Delighted with my discovery and taking leave of my friendly guide, I wandered across the landing into the 19th century French rooms, the superior and condescending attitude of mind

returning with each step. Never did misplaced superiority vanish so quickly. For there I found myself face to face with a Rodin such as I had never dreamt of—a marble bust of Minerva. Here was all the splendour and aloofness of the classic with the intellect and tenderness of the modern. Goddess and woman at once, it fairly took my breath away. There are plenty of other Rodins here as well—his terrifying bronze “Ombre,” which I confess frightened me out of my wits; and the exquisite and voluptuous little marble, the “Tentation de St. Antoine.” But when I had seen the Minerva and had returned to her again and again unable to tear myself away, I could heed nothing else. In fact it was so exciting, that I had to go out to Montplaisir in the afternoon, and calm myself by a visit to M. André Schwartz, the rose-grower, and there, as I have said, not only got a lesson in budding and a ball of the coarse wool with which the buds are tied in, but a load of exquisite roses, many of them novelties not yet distributed. Could balance be better maintained between the study of transcendent art and practical nature?

CHAPTER VI

VIENNE

VALENCE, *Sept.* 5.

THE heat even at 10 A.M. was great. Four ladies, a dog, and a lively canary, besides our two selves, filled the compartment to overflowing. But neither heat, dogs, birds, or fellow-travellers could diminish the sense of eager expectancy with which I started yesterday morning from Lyons for the magic south, or spoil what my French friends would call the agreeable "*émotion*" which the sight of a round-headed pollard covered with large bright green leaves, produced just beyond Vaise. It was the first mulberry. And at once I began to conjure up pictures of Mirèio and Vincen finding the "pimparrin's"¹ nest in the mulberry tree—the beginning of all their tragic story—as they gathered the precious leaves for the "magnan s'endormon di tres."²

¹ Tomtit.

² "The silkworms, in their third sleep."

—Mireille. Frédéric Mistral.

For the southern land to which we are speeding is the land of Mistral and Daudet and the poets of to-day, as well as the home of troubadours and chivalry and art in the middle ages, and the most precious appanage of Imperial Rome.

Yet even Mirèio was forgotten in the all-absorbing interest of ancient Rome when, in a short half-hour the broad Rhône valley narrowed almost to a gorge between fine vine-clad mountains; and emerging from a long tunnel under the Mont Pipet we reached Vienne. For *Vienna Pulchra*, already a city of importance as one of the chief towns of the Allobroges, quickly became after the Roman conquest in 121 B.C. an important Roman colony, the capital of one of the seventeen provinces of Gaul. "Sa position est admirable," says Prosper Mérimée; "assise sur le penchant de coteaux qui dominant le cours du Rhône, elle est entourée de montagnes, les unes pelées, les autres couvertes de végétation, dont les profils variés terminent son panorama de la manière la plus pittoresque."

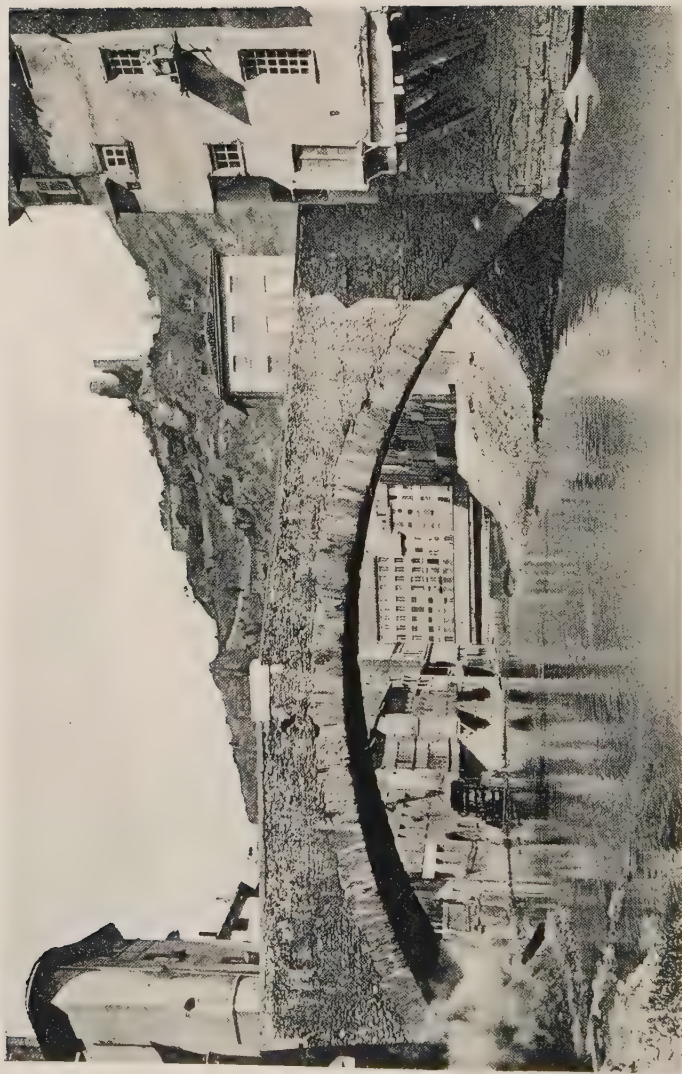
But it must be confessed that as we left the station in a singularly ramshackle little omnibus, thoroughly in keeping with the Hôtel du Nord where I proposed to have luncheon, we saw but little of these beauties. For the city of Vienne

was apparently given over to a Fair. Booths of all sorts and descriptions of merchandise, filled the broad cours Brillier, and lined the narrow cours Romestang, which was thronged besides with country carts, sheep, cattle, goats, poultry, and crowds of excited buyers and sellers. So that progress was slow, as we halted every ten yards for a cart to be backed, a yoke of oxen pushed on to the already packed pavement, or a group of vociferating peasants cleared out of the roadway. Therefore my first impression of Vienne was one of wild confusion, noise, and dust. Yet all this hurly-burly was no fair. It was simply Vienne's weekly market! We were destined to see more of the huge importance of such weekly events in southern towns: but the first sample was rather surprising.

In my mother's journal describing a posting journey down the Rhône to the south some years before her marriage, she says of Vienne, "We slept at a strange inn, the people of which did not look as if they were used to receive so large a party as ours, and stared and tumbled over each other in strange confusion." It seems to me that the Hôtel du Nord cannot have altered much as to strangeness since 1842; and I should be sorry to spend a night there. However, as

hunger curbed my otherwise keen desire to rush forth and see sights, we at once betook ourselves to the long dining-room, only lighted by two windows closely shaded which looked on to the place Mirecourt. We were among the first-comers, and I watched what to me is an ever-diverting process,—the small tables round the room filling up gradually with *officiers* and *sous-officiers* from the garrison in uniform, the *gros bourgeoisie*, and a few of the more important commercial travellers; while clerks and employés and the smaller fry, who are regular daily clients of the house, took their accustomed places at the long *table d'hôte* table in the centre. If one has seen one such an assembly in the French provinces one has seen all; as each individual comes in one gets to know pretty well at last whether he belongs to the centre table or to the category of the *table à part*; and it is only the very untravelled traveller who now thinks of sitting at the former. I had pounced upon a little table against the windows in order to get what light and air there was: and judging by its appearance, and the swarms of flies, I trembled as to what our first experience of southern food might be. Happily a bottle of Vittel, Grande Source, was forthcoming even here to mix with

good white wine ; for whether water flows through Roman aqueducts, as it does in Vienne, or comes from modern waterworks, it is a thing to be scrupulously avoided in French country towns ; while the health-giving waters of Vittel in the Vosges, which I look upon as the original "Fontaine de Jouvence," are now to be found everywhere. As to wine, a wise old French lady gave me a hint many years ago which has often stood me in good stead in out-of-the-way parts of France, namely, that in the wine-growing districts it is always wiser to drink the *vin ordinaire* of the country than to choose so-called Bordeaux or anything else from the wine lists ; as these are not only far more expensive, but pretty certainly bad, while the local *vin ordinaire* is at any rate pure, if not very choice. And all through the famous wine-growing districts along the Rhône which begin at Vienne, the white wine of the country is both excellent and wholesome. But if the wine was decent, strange indeed were the dishes set before us, and endless in number. Sections of melon, huge slices of cold pâté (this I found a common dish of the country in other places), butter, radishes, and a club of bread which would put a policeman's truncheon to shame, formed the *hors d'œuvres*. These



BRIDGE ACROSS THE GÈRE, VIENNE

appetisers were followed by weird hashes, *biftek*, calf's head in vinegar, and other alarming viands in endless quantity, most of which despite hunger we dared not face. The sight however of a tempting pheasant or chicken served whole at a table across the room, made me hope that at least some portion of it might remain for us. But better fortune was to be ours. For presently a whole and exquisitely dressed spring chicken was solemnly presented for approbation to the two *étrangères*, who did ample justice to its youth and beauty. With one of the noble *fromages à la crème* swimming in fresh cream, which are an almost inevitable part of déjeuner in Dauphiné, and a great dish of ripe pears, peaches, and grapes, my misgivings as to food vanished ; and fortified and refreshed we set out to see Vienne.

A charming little river, the Gère, spanned by a single arch bridge and bordered by ancient houses which make one think of some north-Italian town, rushes down to join the Rhône, feeding mills and manufactories on its way, between the two hills up whose steep slopes the city creeps. The Mont Saloman to the north is crowned by the ruins of a 13th century castle, which with a fine disregard of dates is commonly supposed to have been the abode of Pontius

Pilate, who according to Eusebius was banished to Vienne when he returned in disgrace from Judea. On the summit of the other hill, Mont Pipet, stood the Roman Citadel, whose walls and towers, though rebuilt in later times, are still to be seen. For the position of Vienne—commanding the pass up the valley of the Rhône—is so strong as to make it a strategic point of great importance; and even to-day it is fully garrisoned. On the slopes of Mont Pipet are the ranges of seats and other remains of a Roman theatre. While from the Forum in the town below a magnificent stairway leads up the hill; and so perfect are the steps to-day, that at first as I stood in the Forum I imagined it was a modern construction. Of the Forum, which is at the back of the present theatre, two arches and part of a vault remain, used now as a store for stage properties, while the very fine Corinthian columns are buried half way up in the ground. But even these are so gigantic in size that they show to what an immense building they belonged. It is from the further side of the open space beyond their arches that the great stairway starts.

One at least of the subterranean aqueducts was on this same colossal scale. Merimée says "it is a gallery of sufficient size for two persons

to walk side by side. The form of the canal, its casing, and the nature of the cement of which it is made, are all absolutely similar to what I have seen in the aqueducts of Lyon." He adds that a portion of this aqueduct was used at the time he wrote (1834) by a local baker as a store-house for his faggots. Two smaller aqueducts have been repaired, and are in use to-day for the water-supply of the city.

Some years ago a local architect made a clever attempt to reconstruct the Roman city in a drawing, from the actual remains of its buildings. And while of course much is imaginary, yet from his picture, now in the museum, a very fair idea may be obtained of the splendours of Vienne in the 1st century.

Naturally my chief desire was to see the most perfect of all antiquities of Vienne. And when, emerging from a narrow and tortuous street I stood before the beautiful little Temple of Livia and Augustus, the reality fully came up to my eager expectations. The exquisite proportions, the nobility and dignity of the classic conception, the amazing effect of the massive straight lines of the frieze, cornice, and pediment, and the richness of the Corinthian pillars, spoke a new language to me, a language such as no other building had

ever spoken before. For this was an era in my life—the first perfect Temple, whether Greek or Roman, I had ever seen.

What did it matter that this perfect thing had been battered and abused—that it had been turned into a church, the lovely columns of its cella filled in with masonry and their flutings shaved down to make them flush with the vile stone and mortar? It had survived even these barbarisms; and now, cared for and admired, it stood in lonely dignity after 1900 years, dominating the paltry modern houses about it with the calm contempt with which its builders regarded the barbarous tribes they conquered.

The Museum contains many valuable antiquities; and among them the lovely marble greyhound commonly known as “*La chienne*,” was my first quest. It was found in 1817 at Grange Marat, south of Vienne, and is a most graceful and lifelike piece of sculpture. The little group of two boys quarrelling for the possession of a bird, one biting the arm of the other to make him yield up his prey, is in perfect preservation: but it is unfortunately placed so high that it is impossible to examine it in comfort. So admirable a piece of sculpture should be preserved in a case by itself. In fact I had some



REMAINS OF THE FORUM. VIENNE

difficulty in discovering where it was ; and only after repeated enquiries did the custodian show me what I sought, as the amiable old gentleman was far more anxious to display worthless modern pictures. A fine bronze lare or household god, seven or eight inches high ; the marble head of a victor crowned with an oak wreath ; a lovely child's head in high relief lying on a marble slab or pillow ; and the head of a bronze statue of Julius Pacantianus, were also of interest. There is besides a fair collection of fine little bronze figures, lamps, handles of bucklers, &c., and several charming Tanagras. The Museum possesses a good cast of the "Venus of Vienne," now in the Louvre. And the fine head of a Faun, which is also in the Louvre, was found at Vienne.

Two large bronze dolphins found in the Rhône, remind one that after the decline of the second kingdom of Burgundy under Boson in the 9th century, the Dukes of Albon took possession of the city under the title of Dauphins of Vienne until 1349, when the last Dauphin ceded it to the King of France and the title of Dauphin became that of the heir to the French throne.

At St. Colombe—which was a Roman suburb on the right bank of the Rhône, and is now joined to Vienne by a suspension bridge which has

replaced the great stone bridge swept away by the furious river in 1651—many valuable remains have been found ; their discovery being due in the first place to a lady, Madame Michoud, who early in the 19th century began excavations on part of her property where fragments of antique marbles abounded. Roman baths of considerable importance were thus brought to light, besides fragments of columns, capitals, &c., and remarkable statues.

The interest and importance of Vienne in bygone days is by no means confined to Roman remains. For in the history of early Christianity it holds a foremost place as the very cradle of the Faith in Gaul ; and the famous “ Epistle of the Churches of Lyons and Vienne to the Brethren in Asia and Phrygia,”¹ shows how steadfast was the faith of its bitterly persecuted Christians at the end of the 2nd century.

Two of the existing Churches, St. André-le-Bas and St. Pierre, are very ancient. And their square towers with Romanesque arcading remind one of that of the Church of Ainay in Lyons. But instead of the low spire and curious *acrotères* which finish the tower of Ainay, both these come much nearer the Italian campanile, with

¹ See p. 25.

deep-eaved, almost flat roofs of tiles, showing the strong influence of Tuscan architecture on that of Dauphiné. St. Pierre has long been desecrated and now serves as a "Musée lapidaire." And its tower, which has been carefully restored, is a very beautiful specimen of the southern Romanesque style—the arcades of the lower and upper series being plain round-headed arches, and the centre ones trilobed; while the masonry shows alternate courses of brickwork and rubble or stone in the Roman manner. It also possesses an example of the closed porch or "narthex," used in primitive Christian days for the catechumens before they were received into the Church itself.

St. André is a most interesting specimen of southern Romanesque. Its tower, to use Merimée's words, "is a *chef d'œuvre* of grace and lightness." The three rows of round-headed windows, two openings in the lower ones and four in the upper, are separated by small arcades resting on grotesque heads for corbels. And the lower line of windows is carried on across the flat end of the nave behind the rounded apse.

As I passed under the lofty arch of a huge flying buttress to gain entrance at the side door of the Church, the sacristan's wife, who sat nursing

her baby on the doorstep of her little house built into the base of the tower, smiled kindly on me ; and the beauty of both mother and child in the shadow of the great Church was so arresting, that while I paused and talked with her for a moment I longed that it had been possible to get a picture of the lovely group in its singular setting.

The beautiful (for despite many defects it is beautiful) Cathedral of St. Maurice, is of later—one may say, many later dates ; and as in the Cathedral of Lyons, it is a mixture of many styles. Begun in the 11th century (1052) as a Romanesque basilica with a nave and two aisles and an apse without ambulatory, it was not finished till the 16th century.

The apse and first eight bays of the nave belong to the 11th and the beginning of the 12th centuries, with engaged columns and square fluted pilasters surmounted by Romanesque carved capitals. And on the side of one of the flat pilasters in the northern aisle, I was much interested in finding the same curious “smocking” work I had seen in the Church of Ainay. The vaulting of the barrel roof of the nave, painted blue with gold stars, was not finished till the 16th century, and the ribs spring from square-capped pilasters between the bays of the triforium

gallery which runs round the nave and apse. The arches of this gallery are pointed, and in the apse spring from small Gothic columns, showing this portion to be earlier than the nave. While above and below the gallery in the apse runs a band of the singular red incrustations in white stone which we saw in Lyons.

But the chief and most striking beauty of the Cathedral is its position. The floriated Gothic west façade with its three deeply set doors, central window and square towers, is raised high above the street on a lofty *parvis*. The broad flight of steps that lead up to this platform are finished with a delicate open balustrade of the same design we see in the remaining portions of the first gallery above the doors which cuts off the upper part of the frontal of the centre doorway. If this frontal was continued it would exactly reach the top of the great window above. Has it ever existed? And was the pointed decoration above the archivolt of that window its termination?

In the deeply recessed arches of the doorways a few statues of considerable value have escaped the mutilations of the terrible Baron des Adrets and his Huguenot soldiers, who have left the traces of their iconoclastic fury on nearly every

building down the Rhône. One is only thankful that they spared anything. But be that as it may, the great Cathedral as it fronts the street that leads straight down to the bridge across the river is a very noble object.

On our way to the station, we drove by St. André le Bas and across the charming old bridge over the Gère at the foot of Mt. Saloman. Then turning back along the Boulevards and quays beside the Rhône, we got a good view of the great square tower of Philippe de Valois on the opposite shore of the river, now used to carry the telegraph wires across the Rhône. This was built in the 14th century as a *tête de pont*—a defence for the stone bridge built on Roman foundations which was swept away three centuries later. Here again one of the Pontius Pilate legends appears, the tower being known as the *Tour de Mauconseil*, from which it is said he threw himself down. But the whole district abounds in these allusions to his name and history.

In the pretty public gardens further down are many Roman remains; part of the Roman road, sarcophagi turned into drinking fountains, antique marble seats on which aged men rest and children play, and some good columns and inscriptions.



ST. ANDRÉ. VIENNE

While beyond the Place des Allobroges we came to the "Plan de l'Aiguille"—the singular Roman monument which has puzzled many an antiquarian. It is now pretty certain that it formed the *spina* of the wall of a circus or hippodrome. But other authorities maintain that it must be a commemorative monument. As however no trace of any inscription exists the former solution seems the most probable. It consists of four arches flanked at the corners by four engaged columns of which the capitals are merely blocked out and left unfinished. Above this base rises a square pyramid which is partly hollow, resting on five enormous flat stones. The masonry, very fine and skilfully jointed, is put together without cement: but unfortunately it was held in place with metal cramps which have been roughly extracted, leaving ugly scars. Notwithstanding this, the "Tombeau de Pilate" (another allusion) is a most interesting and impressive object and is now treated with the care and respect it deserves.

By this time the afternoon was well advanced, and I was at an end of any sight-seeing powers or even desires. Tea of course was out of the question in such a town; even ices were not to be found to quench our raging thirst for the heat was intolerable. So as a substitute I drove to the

nearest fruit shop ; and there for the sum of four-pence halfpenny laid in a store of two bunches of grapes, four peaches, and four superb pears, which proved most consoling in our roasting coupé when we started away by the four o'clock train for Valence.

CHAPTER VII

THE RHÔNE, VALENCE, AND ST. PÉRAY

VALENCE, *Sept.*

THE beauty of the Rhône valley between Vienne and Valence on a hot September afternoon can hardly be exaggerated. Again and again I asked myself why lovers of the beautiful do not flock to visit—and paint—the Rhône instead of the Rhine. With its real mountains, its extraordinarily picturesque towns, its rich and varied vegetation, its intense yet pale colours, the French is ten times finer than the German river. And if castles are needed to please the sentimental traveller, they may be found by the dozen, perched on every hill-top, on every rocky point.

As we steamed out of Vienne, the fine lines of the chain of Mont Pilat here reaching a height of 3500 feet, rose plum-colour and misty across the river against the western sky, with Ampuis and its château down on the level land at the foot of the Côte Rotie whose celebrated vineyards

cover every inch of its sunny slopes and produce the wine which has been renowned for nearly 2000 years. Mulberries and countless fruit-trees grew in the flat valley above the stubble of what had been cornfields. Endless vineyards covered every steep slope on either side of the river. And poplars along its banks "composed," as only French poplars can, against the lofty hills.

The whole journey seemed to take us through one vast vineyard, or rather a continuous mosaic work of small ones, carved, in many places out of the very rock itself. Well-known names of famous wines, of ancient towns, of châteaux with romantic histories, succeeded one another fast. Rousillon's vineyards, with its castle where Charles IX. confirmed the edict that the year should begin on the 1st of January; and some 15 miles further on the great château of Diane de Poitiers at St. Vallier, with the château de Pilate near by—yet another spot in the Pontius Pilate legend, from whose precipice he is said to have thrown himself—a far more plausible ending than that at Vienne. Then as the lofty hills closed in on either side the river to form a narrow pass, the train ran round a sort of cape at the base of a precipitous round-topped hill that dropped almost straight into the Rhône, and

on the gentler slope of its southern side huge notice boards in each of the carefully walled vineyards that divide the hill from base to summit, proclaimed in gigantic letters that here the world-famous "Hermitage" is produced.

Presently we crossed the Isère, which here joins the Rhône; and looking up at its wide and fertile valley the Alps of Dauphiné appeared in the distance: but to-day they were so veiled in the mist of impending thunder that there was no possibility of getting a glimpse of Mont Blanc, which on clear days towers over the surrounding mountains, though nearly 80 miles away. It is still a moot question among the learned whether Hannibal chose Vienne or Valence as the starting-point of his march across the Alps. And though I know absolutely nothing on the subject, after seeing the two cities and their surroundings humble common-sense would certainly point to Valence and the valley of the Isère, so broad and apparently easy a route here, rather than the rocky passes and hills of the Rhône up to Vienne and beyond it.

Thunder-mist and twilight prevented my getting any idea of Valence when, very hot and tired, we reached the excellent Hôtel de la Croix d'Or; and after wandering along interminable

passages, I was thankful to find myself in a good, cool room with big windows opening on to a balcony, S. being only two doors from me, and to sit still and cool off a little while she unpacked. For a long and exciting day's sight-seeing—with Roman temples, Gothic cathedrals, Romanesque churches, vineyards, rivers, mountains and "tout le tremblement," in a temperature near the 80's—is not a little exhausting to the leisurely traveller.

An hour later when I went down to dinner, I perceived in a moment that this was not the France I knew, but a new country—a land living its own life regardless of the rest of the world, well-to-do, self-centered, and perfectly independent of the tourist and the foreigner, whose advent is a mere passing episode which makes very little difference to its own interests, or its ordinary life; withal friendly, kindly, self-satisfied, talkative, and very fond of the good things of life in matters of food.

A confidential, middle-aged waiter at once took entire charge of me and gave me a large table in a corner beside one of the big windows, when portly Monsieur showed me into the dining-room, or rather that portion of the vast room on the first floor reserved for visitors, and divided from

that allotted to the table d'hôte by a high wooden partition open above to the ceiling. As no one spoke a word of English in the whole establishment, I delivered S. over to the care of a civil waiter with special directions to look well after her comfort ; and found she had a table to herself in this further room, while the waiter not only told her the name of every dish, but if she refused one his distress was so great that he ran off to the kitchen, returning with two boiled eggs to tempt her appetite !

Here for the first time we met with true southern cooking—fresh olive oil being used instead of butter ; and though much too rich for northern tastes, the result was certainly excellent, as the chef was a perfect *cordon bleu*. My chief complaint was against the overpowering amount of dishes at déjeuner and dinner, which, I imagine, were the reason for the size of my *table à part* ; for it was absolutely covered at times with viands of various sorts, not a third of which could I partake of with the best will in the world. Here luncheon always began with melon and huge slices of paté, besides other *hors d'œuvres*. And if I sent away one thing after another untouched, my confidential guardian was as much distressed as S.'s waiter. Only a few French

motoring tourists, or little parties of local magnates, shared the vast spaces of my dining-room at first. But next day a family party of tall daughters, a pasty-faced youth, their tired mother, and an enormously fat father, arrived—evidently at Valence on business of some sort—who must certainly have come from the extreme south, judging by the gusto with which they all devoured that terrible compound *bouillabaisse*. I felt obliged to taste the revolting mess, as I had never seen it before. But a black and fiery Mexican *mole de Guacalote* would have been preferable to the famous southern dish floating with oil and saffron, and one mouthful was more than enough.

The threatening storm broke during the night in heavy rain. And when I looked out next morning the wide Place de la République, and the Duchesse d'Uzé's gigantic monument to Emile Augier (a native of Valence), were all shining wet. This wide *place* is continued as an equally wide boulevard right through the town, and gives one a pleasant sense of spaciousness, a most singular contrast to the narrow and exceedingly dirty streets which lead into it. The view from my balcony was decidedly attractive when the rain ceased, the clouds rolled off, and the sun appeared. To the east lofty hills

capped with a range of limestone cliffs, revealed themselves in the distance over the trees of the boulevard. To the west one perceived that Valence stands on a plateau high above the Rhône, the Avenue Gambetta leading by a steep descent from the Place de la République past the Champ de Mars and the Parc Jouvet, to the handsome stone bridge across the river. The wide flat valley on the further side of the Rhône is walled in by a tremendous range of arid limestone cliffs, ending in a bold promontory crowned with the weird ruin of the Château de Cruzol, known locally as *les Cornes de Cruzol*, above the fertile side valley of St. Péray. Only one of the *cornes* or towers remains, pointing like some finger of fate into the clear air.

By half-past nine the day was radiant ; and the cool interior of the Cathedral was most welcome when I made my way in through a crowd of beggars to High Mass. For the sun outside was so hot that I could not stand in it for many minutes against the balustrade of the terrace at the west end, as I gazed over house roofs and trees and precipitous flights of steps between ancient houses below me, upon the lovely views up and down the luxuriant valley, through whose wide stretches the noble Rhône follows its

southward course with many a sweeping curve and double.

The Cathedral, dedicated to St. Apollinaire, was consecrated by Pope Urban II. in 1095. Though restored in the 12th century, and again in 1862, it remains a fine example of Auvergnat Romanesque. It consists of three aisles; the centre one with a plain barrel vault without clerestory or triforium, the outer ones vaulted with simple crossing ribs, and two transepts with a low square tower at the crossing. The nave ends beyond the crossing in an apse, round which runs an open colonnade of very narrow round-headed arches separating it from the ambulatory and apsidal chapels. The whole building attracted me greatly as it was to me a new type, and I spent a considerable amount of time in it on various occasions. An effect of great lightness is produced by the very lofty pillars supporting the round-headed arches between the nave and the aisles, and the still loftier pilasters, all round and plain, with almost pure Corinthian capitals from which spring the plain *arcs-doubleaux* across the barrel roof. The pillars consist of a square pier with four slender engaged columns—a form which belongs exclusively to the 11th and early 12th centuries. The sense of height

and graceful dignity—so singular in its contrast to the heavy solidity of northern Romanesque and Norman architecture—is enhanced by the windows being placed high up in the blank walls of the aisles. And the effect of the whole interior is at once very solid, and, if one may use such a much-abused word in its proper sense, very elegant.

The handsome Romanesque tower with a porch beneath it at the west end, is modern, built by M. Pallu in 1862, and forms a striking object from the Rhône valley far below. Along the outside of the nave runs an interesting little arcade of alternate round and straight-sided arches; while the rounded exterior of the apse is strengthened by buttresses in the form of small shafts with Corinthian capitals.

On the north of the Cathedral, reached either through the north door, or from the Place des Clercs, stands a most curious building—Le Pendentif—built in 1548, *en pleine Renaissance*, as a mausoleum of the Mistral family. It is a square of four piers with arches between them and pillars at the angles, supporting a vault whose architectural construction gave its name to the whole erection.¹

¹ The earliest examples of this peculiar method of construction in France are to be found supporting the cupolas of the 10th century Abbey Church of St. Front at Perigueux.

In the narrow and filthy streets of the old quarter near the Cathedral there are a few good Renaissance houses; chief among them is the "Maison des Têtes" in the Grand Rue, decorated with statues, medallions, busts, and richly sculptured windows, unfortunately all in a most dilapidated condition. But the groined and vaulted passage which leads into a curious little courtyard is well preserved, each boss a finely sculptured head; and the whole building is an interesting bit of domestic architecture of the 16th century.

A SOUTHERN MARKET

In "Numa Roumestan," Daudet tells, as only he can tell, how the inhabitant of the south of France wakes on market-day to find that his city has been completely transformed during the night. And as I looked out of my window early on Monday, it was almost impossible to believe that Valence of Monday morning was the same place I had seen on Sunday night. How it had come about was a perfect mystery.

The whole of the broad promenade up the centre of the boulevard was lined with wooden and canvas booths beneath the trees on either side. The roadways outside them were crowded with market carts, some drawn by stout hurrying

horses or active little donkeys, others by yokes of golden-dun oxen or cows who absolutely refused to hurry, all piled high with sacks of corn and potatoes, fresh vegetables and fruit; such fruit too—baskets of ripe white grapes, luscious pears, crimson-cheeked peaches, scarlet tomatoes. Dozens of strange, dusty, ramshackle diligences stood in ranks in front of the cafés. While above the babel of voices from the excited, vociferating throngs of men, women, and children, who crowded the Place de la République, rose the strident shouts of vendors crying their wares, showmen displaying mangy and repulsive monkeys, or a one-legged man leading about an enormous broad-tail sheep with four horns, which he declared to be one of the wonders of the world.

It was all so gay in the bright sun and the fresh almost cold breeze, that I lost no time in going out to see the humours of the market; and discovered that most of the inhabitants of Valence and the country round were doing their shopping for the week at the little booths of drapery, lace, ribbons, boots, stationery, combs and brushes, glass and china, cheap jewellery, and ornaments. Further along, beyond these frivolities, having resisted the pressing offers of

a loud-voiced vendor of hand-made Cluny and torchon laces, I found more serious and interesting goods; for they betokened the occupations of the country. Men predominated, and women were scarce among the buyers. Here were stands of excellent cutlery; and tools of all sorts, many of the implements curiously primitive in form, such as the hoe which Millet immortalized in the tragedy of "L'homme à la houe," that penetrating picture which perished in the San Francisco earthquake. Close by, the attraction was the *sparterie* of the country, that clean white rope-work used so largely in harness and trappings for the handsome mules, nets for the horses and oxen to keep off the pest of flies, finest cords and heavy ropes.

Then came the *vannerie*—those baskets so all-important in a wine-growing country; and one began to realize what a place the *vanneur* and his goods hold in the south. Each district has its own shape. Here they are square; the dark red osiers finished with a strong edging of wood, and capable of holding about a bushel of fruit. These great grape baskets are so attractive that I longed to buy them; though a complete series of the various shapes in the south would have needed a special

truck to transport them to England. Still more did I covet the *tonneleur's* wooden grape tubs close by—slightly oval, the two upright staves at each end cut out of a solid oak stem, with a portion of an outstanding branch left intact some 6 or 8 inches long and neatly rounded, to serve as a handle for lifting them into the carts when the vine-gatherer's basketfuls have been poured into them. Besides these there were huge tubs for treading the grapes, and new barrels for the wine; and I wished we had been coming back here in three weeks' time to see the vintage of St. Péray and the district in full swing; for it is later than usual this year, as the vines were kept back by spring frosts and summer hailstorms. The woman in charge of all this *tonnellerie* was amused at my interest; and in very halting French—for here every one, even the fairly educated middle class, uses little but dialect in everyday talk—explained the uses of each of her wares, and laughed heartily when I said I coveted her grape tubs for my garden at home. But conversation was a matter of some difficulty in the midst of the general babel, to an accompaniment of bleating goats and sheep in pens or carts or tied to the benches under the trees.

We therefore turned back to the Champ de Mars—successfully running the gauntlet once more of the strident-voiced lace vendor—as we wanted to sample the cattle market. And here we found some scores of the handsome golden-dun cattle of the country, and made our way cautiously along the pavement under the houses, through crowds of country-men, dodging now and again the rush of some impatient young steer who broke away from the golden mass of his elders and betters and threatened to scatter us all. Beautiful and noble beasts are these great golden oxen, and for the most part in splendid condition with sleek coats shining in the sun, the *frères* standing quietly side by side under the heavy wooden yoke; for the wise country-man will never, except in case of death or dire necessity, separate the yoke-fellows, or they refuse to work and often pine away and die of sorrow. And as I looked at them I wondered whether some there had listened to the mysterious chant, the solemn and melancholy recitation, with which the skilled labourer of the centre of France “qui sait chanter les bœufs” excites and encourages his beasts in their work.

But far more arresting than all this lowing golden crowd was the noble figure of a



MAISON DES TÊTES. VALENCE



CHÂTEAU DE CRUZOL AND THE RHÔNE VALLEY. VALENCE

beautiful country-woman, standing "*gaule*" in hand against some very restless and handsome yearlings. She might have stood for the tragic muse herself—tall, stately, in an unconsciously splendid pose, with a face of wonderful beauty, and great sad eyes out of which looked a world of sorrow and resignation.

ST. PÉRAY

It was a dazzling afternoon on market-day, with a north-west breeze that had dropped from sharply cold at 7 A.M. to delightfully fresh and cool at 3 P.M.

Under the trees of the Boulevard I found a good little carriage, a strong sleek black horse, and a civil driver who for six francs would take us out to St. Péray. So, armed with a card from kindly Madame Perignon of the Gd. Hôtel de la Croix d'Or, we set forth down the white road, over the long white bridge across the great Rhône running blue between its shoals of white pebbles, and leaving the white houses of the suburbs behind we fared on into the real country, a white ribbon of road stretching before us shaded with plane trees on either hand. Pollard mulberry trees in full leaf dotted the rich plain above the crops. Fruit-trees rose

out of vineyards. And before us the scarred and arid limestone cliffs, now gaining colour and shape in the western shadow, reared their huge wall, with the weird ruin of Cruzol, a part of their very substance, towering at the point where they drop into the fertile valley of St. Péray.

As we near that valley we see that every inch of ground is in vines. From the richness of the roadside vineyard they gradually creep up the steep hillsides, terraced in the most precipitous parts, thriving apparently in what looks like broken rock instead of soil. And it is from these vines alone—from this one little narrow valley so carefully and skilfully cultivated, that the delicious sparkling wine of St. Péray comes.

A charming village is St. Péray, of white, red-roofed houses embowered in trees; and vines, vines everywhere. Up the narrow street progress was made difficult at times by market carts and newly bought yokes of golden-dun oxen returning from Valence. And when an automobile came snoring and grunting down upon us, the civil driver and sleek black horse took us nearly on to the narrow strip of pavement to let it pass. At one of the chief houses

we soon stopped; and as a smiling maiden, whose powers of speaking the French language were chiefly remarkable by their absence, opened the door and took in my card, we caught a glimpse at the end of the passage of a delightful old courtyard, with vines and flowers against grey stone walls and the mountain rising behind.

In a moment more, handsome Mme Vve. Milliand herself bade a gracious welcome to the inquisitive *étrangères* who so greatly desired to see the *caves*, and giving directions in an unknown tongue, sent the smiling maiden two or three doors down the street for the overseer who would show us everything.

We were first taken across the vine-grown court, where a green reed screen was lifted and a door opened into blackest night, for the *cave* was cut out of the rock itself. But a candle soon showed stacks of wine two years old, the bottles lying on their sides for the sediment to settle; and bits of a broken bottle, and moisture running down a little drain in the floor to a shallow round covered sink, told a tale of the frequent explosions of the sparkling wine in its earlier stages. The foreman held up a bottle against the candle—for no electric light is allowed in this *cave*, the temperature

being kept to 12° centigrade—and we saw the sediment lying along one side.

A few steps down the street took us to the chief cellars where all the work is done. Here we were in the midst of enormous barrels of the still white wine ready for bottling or sale, men were busy over tubs and barrels for the coming vintage, and in the centre lighted from above, was more than one mysterious apparatus of which the use was to be revealed by-and-by. To every question that was eagerly pressed upon our guide the invariable answer was, "Ah! mais vous allez tout voir!" and so indeed we did in due time. First, however, our way led down a stair to an underground cellar. An electric light carried before us at the end of a long wire revealed endless stacks of bottles of three-year-old wine—some 80,000 in that one place—still lying on their sides and waiting to be cleared. Then up again, and we found the three-year-old wine in process of clearing; each bottle placed head downwards at an acute angle through a hole in racks. And now, for a whole month, each of these bottles is gently turned every day an inch or two, so that the sediment gradually settles in the neck against the cork, until at last they are finally set on end head downwards, the cork of one standing on the base

of another. Here were fresh signs of explosion ; “un éboulement,” remarked the overseer with a rather wry face, as we traced its course down a stack. Through this cellar we reached the bottles of four-year-old wine, which had been cleared and were corked and wired and ready for finishing. The dust was rubbed off, the bottle held up against the light, and the beautiful wine showed as clear as crystal.

This process of clearing and final corking, our charming hostess now decrees we are to see. Two bottles are selected, and one laid aside on a bench. Why two I fail at first to see. This is the *Vin Sec*, the actual juice of the grape unalloyed. The foreman holds the bottle sideways—the sediment some half an inch thick being close to the cork—with its head inside a covered receptacle against the wall with a drain below. With a sharp knife he severs the strings and loosens the cork which with a resounding report flies out into the covered receptacle, and with it out flies every particle of the sediment. In a moment more the pure wine is foaming out into two small slender glasses, and we drink to the health of handsome, gracious Madame Milliand, and the prosperity of the house.

Meanwhile a workman has seated himself

behind the machine ready for corking; and another sits close by at a second queer apparatus. An enormous cork, apparently twice too big for any bottle, is produced and placed ready in the corking machine. And now, to show us how the *vin sec* is finished for exportation, a small metal dipper with a snout is filled with liqueur and poured into the open bottle, which is then handed to the corker and placed under his machine. With a turn of the crank down comes a heavy weight with a thump that one thought must break any bottle in the world; and hey presto! the gigantic cork has been forced in, its top overlapping the bottle's mouth. It is passed on to machine-man No. 2, who whisks a piece of clean string attached to his machine round the neck, crosses it over the top, turns a lever, and the flat-topped cork has been pulled by the intense tightening of the string into the well-known round knob of the ordinary Champagne cork!

But once again the strings are cut and the bottle opened. For we are now to taste sweetened St. Péray, and try the effect of the added liqueur. And it is Mme Milliand herself who lets the cork fly and fills the slender glasses with the sparkling frothing wine. Excellent indeed it is. For although sweeter than the natural dry wine,

it is still dry enough to suit the taste of those to whom sweet Champagne is detestable ; and there is still that purity and freshness of the actual grape about it that much doctored wine can never possess.

All this time the second bottle has been lying on its bench, only inspected from time to time by a lively little cat who lives in the cellars, companion and pet of all the workmen. “ Il ne sort jamais, jamais,” we are told, as his whole duty in life is to catch the innumerable rats which haunt the cellars. And that he fulfils his duty admirably is evident, for he is thin as a lath, after the fashion of all rat-eating cats.

But to return to bottle No. 2. We now discover that it is intended as an object-lesson on the whole process to the end. The cork is let fly as before, and the sediment with it, while a few drops of wine are also allowed to escape to make room for the dipperful of liqueur which fills it up to the right point. The cork is forced in by the corker, and again we marvel that the bottle is not broken. The string is tied as before by No. 2, and a second string across it. Mme Milliand hands him a bright length of wire from a batch cut ready for use. With a deft turn it is round the neck in a trice, and by a fresh

instrument is twisted and flattened into place. A sheet of gold foil is pasted and pressed over cork and wire. Then comes the etiquette of the house—

LEON MILLIAND ET CIE.

Propriétaires et Négociants

St. Péray

(Ardèche)

Last of all, a white half-moon is pasted at the bottom of the gold foil—the *carte blanche* of “St. Péray Grand Mousseux.” And the bottle is ready for exportation.

It was a fascinating hour that we spent in those dim, and partly rock-hewn cellars. And as we thanked the courteous intelligent overseer, who has been Mme Milliand’s right hand for twenty years, and bade farewell to that charming and gentle lady, we felt that St. Péray would no longer be to us a mere name, but a memory fraught with friendly kindness.

Even the civil driver was not forgotten by our hosts. For as we went out into the dazzling light of the street, he was summoned from his drowsily impatient watch on the step of his carriage and given a glass of such wine as I warrant he had never tasted before. So profound was

his gratitude, that as we left the village he proposed to take us back another way—a road running parallel with the railway of the *rive droite* from Lyons to Nîmes—in the deep shadow of Cruzol and its stupendous cliff, up the debris of whose base new vineyards were slowly creeping, while our old friend of the herbaceous border at home, the blue *Echinops ritro*, grew in profusion along the roadside. At the little village of Guillerand we turned homewards to the Pont de Pierre through luxuriant vineyards, each vine here being tied to a 5-foot stake and the shoots of each pair turned to meet each other, thus forming a graceful little arch hung at the base with bunches of purple grapes. And over this charming foreground, the strange peaked summit of the Mont Rochecourbe rose some forty miles away to the south-west behind the limestone chain of le Vercors.

CHAPTER VIII

AVIGNON

GD. HÔTEL DE L'EUROPE,
Sept. 8.

DEAR ——. Just arrived in true southern heat and blazing sun, after a gorgeous two hours' journey down from Valence; and I am now writing in my vast and shaded bedroom, having been greatly refreshed with quite good tea, "for French tea" as S. says, in the glass-roofed inner courtyard which seems to serve as the general sitting-place. The outer courtyard is a green and flowery space where the omnibus and endless touring automobiles disgorge their loads under a gigantic plane tree, with a fig almost as big beside it, and oleanders, vines and climbing plants against the walls.

I think this will be comfortable; and there is an aged white-haired *valet de chambre* in a snowy apron who showed me the rooms up the low brick and wood steps of the wide staircase, who is worth going many miles to see. He is just

like dear Coquelin aîné (only better looking) in "La Joie fait peur"—a treasure of a man.

The journey down was very beautiful, stormy and cool at first, so that the Alps were somewhat unkindly covered. But from Montélimar the sun came out, and so did the snows in the distance on Mt Pelvoux and the great Alps towards Monte Viso. While mulberries, vines, maize, cypresses in long sheltering lines, the great reeds we used to delight in on the Riviera growing here in the ditches and used as screens for the vineyards against the scourging Mistral, and at last olives, gave me exquisite pleasure as we neared Orange, where I got a good view of the Roman Arch and the tremendous wall of the Theatre. I shall go up there for a few hours on the first cool day. I decided it was too tiring to stop there on my way down here, as I did at Vienne on the way to Valence; and it is only half-an-hour's journey from Avignon.

I have begun at last to see some really handsome women. I told you of the noble "tragic muse" in the cattle market at Valence. And here while we waited in the omnibus for the luggage to come out, there were two or three peasant or farmer women sitting on the steps outside the station who were quite beautiful, of

a new and very southern type, with coal-black hair and eyes, very brown smooth skin, and lovely teeth which showed every minute as they laughed and chattered in their own Provençal tongue.

All the servants here seem elderly; from the white-haired Coquelin, the confidential head-waiter who presses food upon me with an encouraging smile, the second waiter with a profile like some Antonine Emperor on a coin, to an ancient chamber-maid who is horrified at my opening the jalousies as well as the windows; for it is the fashion here to keep every room in complete darkness and breathless for want of air, till evening. Do you remember how, in *Numa Roumestan*, la tante Portal's house was always kept hermetically sealed? My room looks out into a narrow street, the rue de Limas, and two nests full of young martins, whose parents urge them to fly, keep up the most lively squeaking under the deep eaves of the houses opposite, roofed with the familiar brown tiles that assure me if nothing else does that I am verily and indeed in the south.

You know how greatly I have always wished to see Avignon, since that glimpse I caught in the early dawn of the Palais des Papes as we ran

south to Marseilles in 1893. That dim vision of the machicoulis on its towers and on the fortifications has come back to me again and again, drawing me hither like a mysterious and irresistible magnet. And now after all these years I am here—with time at my disposal to absorb the strange, romantic, fateful place.

We came in through the crenelated ramparts to-day ; and half-way up the modern rue de la République turned away by devious side streets to the Place Crillon, close to the ramparts again. I must try to make out the points of the compass, for at the present moment I have not an idea of where I am.

Sept. 9.

I have seen it—the city of my dreams. And my only feeling after a mere rapid glimpse, is—Avignon is stupendous. As I came suddenly upon the Palais des Papes, I exclaimed out loud. No other adjective but stupendous can describe the effect on one's mind as one walks up under them of those tremendous walls built on the rock itself, their height and massive power increased by the flat, narrow, lofty pointed arches forming machicolations on the flat walls surmounted here and there with battlements ; of the enormous square towers ; of the vast proportions of the

whole building. The amazing simplicity of form gives a sense of strength I have never seen equalled. It is not a Palace. It is a great Fortress. No king, no republic, no great noble could have conceived and built such a place. It could only be the work of a Pope. And two good American puritans to whom I was saying this just now, wholly agreed ; for they had been perfectly overwhelmed by it.

The heat was intense ; the sun almost unbearable at a quarter past nine ; and the shadow of the huge mass alone made walking possible, as I slowly climbed the long flight of white steps to the fine Calvary in front of Notre Dame des Doms, the Cathedral. And as I entered through the (apparently) purely Roman porch, the change from dazzling light outside to the dark interior quite blinded me for a moment. The whole thing is so vast, so impressive, that I must take a day or two to calm down and collect my ideas before I can enter into details.

I am also too fevered with mosquito bites to be able to think or write clearly. For alas ! though these charming kindly southerners in their desire to please me, swore by all their gods, heathen and other, that there was no mosquitos here, I was badly bitten last night and imagined at first it

was by flies until S. discovered one of the evil ones on the muslin curtain. So this afternoon we hastened to the rue de la République and asked if they had any *tulle grossière* to use as a mosquito net ; whereupon the shopman smiled knowingly, and produced the regulation mosquito netting as a matter of course. I told Madame this morning of my discovery and misery. And she in sorrow promptly acknowledged that this year, "for the first time" (of course) they *have* appeared.—Yours ever,

R. G. K.

CHAPTER IX

THE PALAIS DES PAPES

THE great Rock—the Rocher des Doms—would seem from its position and conformation to have been marked out from earliest times as a military position of strength and importance. On the north—its highest point—it drops straight some 200 feet, with the Rhône flowing round its base. Its eastern and southern faces are also perpendicular. So that the only approach to it is from the west, and the ascent even here is steep.

In the 13th century the rock was partly covered with pasturage, and partly with buildings dominated by the ancient castle of the Podestat, with the bishop's palace near by, and the 11th century Church of Notre Dame des Doms. This Romanesque Church, now the Cathedral, is the only building which remains of those anterior to the coming of the Popes. And the crest of the rock above the river has been transformed into a charming and shady public garden, where all



PALAIS DES PAPES, EASTERN FAÇADE. AVIGNON



PALAIS DES PAPES, FAÇADE. AVIGNON

the nurses of Avignon bring their charges in the afternoon, and mammas and daughters sit working at the everlasting *tapisserie* which is never out of a Frenchwoman's hand.

Avignon has seen many strange events in its history. We find it first an important Roman colony. Then it falls in turn into the hands of Burgundians, Franks, and Visigoths. It is twice taken by the Saracens and twice delivered by Charles Martel. Then it forms part of the kingdom of Arles ; and later is made the capital of Provence. In the 12th century it declares itself a free and independent city, and builds fresh fortifications and walls. In the wars of the Albigenses, with whom it sided, Avignon was besieged, taken, and made subject to the Comte de Provence in 1251. But of all these strange fortunes the strangest was yet to come, when in 1308 the first of that remarkable series of seven Popes—who were all Frenchmen—transferred the Holy See from Rome to Avignon. Clement V. as Archbishop of Bordeaux had already come to Avignon in 1303. And five years later in 1308 he returned to it as Pope, finding his position in Rome insecure from the distracted state of Italy rent with factions. And thus began that singular episode which lasted for a

hundred years, during which seven Pontiffs and two anti-popes reigned in Avignon.

While Clement V. lived, he occupied the Convent of Dominicans. John XXII., his successor (1316), was the first to settle in the palace, which occupied that part of the site of the present Palais des Papes next to the Cathedral. He added largely to it; while his nephew Armand de Via, bishop of Avignon, bought the ground on which the Archevêché (known until the last few years as le Petit Seminaire) stands, at the further end of the esplanade or place du Palais. Benedict XII. (1336) pulled down the work of his predecessor, and, upon plans furnished by Pierre Obreri, built all the northern part of the present palace. To him are due the enormous Tour de Trouillas of sinister memory, and the hardly less impressive Tour de la Gache next to the Cathedral. Clement VI. his successor (1342) built the southern façade of this portion of the palace—that which now forms the north side of the great Cour d'honneur—and also the walls of the enceinte which served as an arsenal. For although nominally under the protection of the King of France, this Pontiff had become the independent sovereign of the city and district, having in 1347 bought Avignon and the Comtat Venaissin from

Queen Jeanne of Naples, who was by heritage Comtesse de Provence. And it was not until 1791 that the proud city and the Comtat Venaissin were united to the kingdom of France. The Pope therefore thought it highly desirable to make his palace a strong fort in the event of possible attacks, commanding the only approach, namely from the western side, of the Rocher des Doms.

Innocent VI. (1352) completed the southern portion of the palace and the magnificent Chapelle supérieure. And Urbain V. (1362) levelled the great courtyard by cutting it out of the solid rock, and sank the huge well in it which has been cleansed and restored within the last few months. He also built the eastern wing overlooking the gardens, now a barrack yard, far below at the base of the cliff; and added the seventh tower, the Tour des Anges. The last of the seven Popes, Gregory XI. (1370) returned to Rome in 1376, where he died in 1378.

But after his death during the great schism, the two anti-popes Clement VII. and Benedict XIII. occupied the palace at Avignon from 1379 to 1403. It was during the latter's residence that the Palais des Papes was besieged by Maréchal Boucicaut in September 1398; and as it could not be taken, it was blockaded until 1403

when the anti-pope fled. Roderic de Luna, Benedict's nephew, was then besieged in it by the Papal legates and the King of France; and he only capitulated in 1411.

From that time down to 1791, the palace was inhabited by legates and vice-legates who governed the city of Avignon and the Comtat-Venaissin in the name of the Holy See. And it can easily be imagined the jealousy with which this little kingdom within their kingdom was regarded by the Kings of France. But when in 1791 it became state property, it paid dearly for its four centuries of magnificence. For the palace was turned into a common barrack, with the exception of the Tour de la Gache and the adjoining wings which became the prison for the Vaucluse till 1871, when it was utilized, as now, for the departmental Archives.

Happily under the enlightened direction of the Commission des Monuments historiques—that invaluable body which has saved so many precious buildings in France from utter destruction—the palace was evacuated as a barrack in 1906; and the work of restoration is now being gradually carried out with the utmost care and skill. But during its “military occupation,” when the *salle de l’Audience* and the *Grande*

Chapelle above were turned into five floors of dormitories, irreparable harm was done to the precious frescoes by Simone Memmi and other Italian artists.

Each time one comes in sight of the Palais des Papes, the startling effect is the same. On my second visit the whole mass was in the full blaze of the afternoon sun—its maize-coloured walls and towers clear cut against an intensely blue sky. One exclaimed aloud afresh ; as it seemed more colossal than ever. For there is no lengthy approach, no gradual preparation from afar to accustom the eye to its proportions. Other buildings hide it from view in the place de l'Hôtel de Ville, and when by a short steep street of tall handsome houses and high-walled gardens one debouches on the spacious place du Palais, the whole palace with Notre Dame des Doms backed by the wooded crest of the Rocher des Doms, is close before one.

One can well believe that these massive walls, in some parts 4 metres in thickness and over 100 feet in height, could defy all attempts to sap or batter them by attacking forces. And, as I have said, the effect of their height as well as their strength is rendered yet more striking by the perfectly plain, narrow pointed arches between

the flat buttresses applied to them. As one looks up at these lofty arches from beneath close to the building, one sees that a space of some three feet or more separates them at the top from the inner wall, thus enabling the defenders from the shelter of the parapet they support to hurl down large beams, to say nothing of great stones and boiling lead, on the enemy who attempts to sap the foundations. These long arched grooves, though often used in the south of France, are a form of machicolation almost unknown in the north, where continuous machicolations on corbels are universal. On the towers of the palace the corbelled form of machicolations was used, though they have disappeared from most of them, except the Tour de la Gache at the N.W. end of the façade which has been carefully restored. The battlements which crowned the towers and walls, and likewise disappeared, have also been partly restored. But one interesting feature of the façade has unfortunately vanished—it is to be feared for ever. Until 1749, two graceful pointed tourelles rose out of the two stone "swallows' nests" in the parapet above the main entrance, breaking the severe lines of the fortress with a charming note of gaiety and lightness, as may be seen in various old prints and drawings. It is



ENTRANCE TO PALAIS DES PAPES. AVIGNON

much to be regretted that they were then removed on the plea that they threatened to collapse. These drawings and prints also show that the main entrance, which was immediately guarded by two portcullises, was further protected by a crenelated outwork with redoubts, fosse, and drawbridge, built in 1665 by the warlike Julien de La Rovère—afterwards Pope Julius II.—replacing the original outworks which covered most of the esplanade divided “into several baileys or courts, with walls, towers and gates.”¹ And although the present *perron* with its double flight of steps, which was built in 1857 under the direction of Viollet-le-Duc, is certainly both handsome and convenient, one cannot but regret that all trace of these earlier defences should have been obliterated. One fine six-sided tourelle however, remains at the N.W. angle of the façade, supported by a double encorbelled base and pierced with loopholes, a most effective feature in the building.

When one afternoon I made my way up the steps of Viollet-le-Duc’s *perron*, and passed under the graceful pointed arch of the entrance gateway with the arms of Clement VI.—those of the de Beaufort family—on the wall above it, I began

¹ MacGibbon, p. 145.

to realize the strength of those walls which I had hitherto only looked on from without. For the gateway is a long vestibule, its vaulted roof—of which the central boss also bears the de Beaufort arms—decorated with frescoes in *grisaille* of the 17th century. The huge doors are all that remain in the way of defence, though the grooves for the two mighty portcullises are still to be seen: but the doors themselves are so massive, that one imagines they could withstand almost any form of attack short of modern artillery or dynamite.

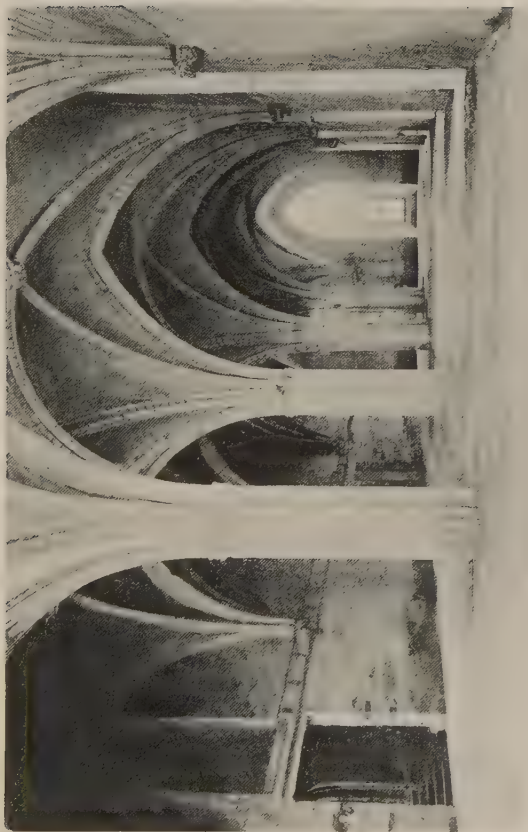
The vast cour d'honneur which Urbain V. levelled in the solid rock, was swarming with white-bloused workmen instead of soldiers, and thick with white dust from the admirable Ville-neuve stone they are using in their work of restoration. I stopped for a moment to look at Pope Urbain's great well, now restored to use: and following my guide, who only knew enough modern French to be able to repeat parrot-wise her well-learned lesson, I was nearly choked with the said white dust as we entered the great building on the south side of the courtyard, and went down the steps into the Salle de l'Audience which forms the basement of the whole southern block of the palace. It is a noble hall, 52 metres long by $16\frac{1}{2}$ wide, divided into two aisles by five

groups of eight round columns, from which, and from springers on the walls rise the ribs of the pointed vaultings of the roof. It was once decorated with fine frescoes by Simone Memmi. But alas! for nearly a hundred years the great palace was turned into a barrack, only evacuated, as I have said, in 1906; and the Salle de l'Audience and the beautiful Grande Chapelle above it, were divided into five floors for soldiers' dormitories. It is therefore small wonder that only a few fragments of these precious paintings have survived—some figures of prophets and sibyls in the segments of the vaulting near the east end; traces of a Crucifixion between the two east windows; bits of inscriptions and St. Peter's keys here and there; and on the capitals of the pillars, bosses and springers of the roof, enough faded colours remain to show how rich the decoration of the great hall must have been.

Making our way up the grand staircase which was rebuilt in 1659 by the vice-legat Gaspard de Lascaris, I found masons and sculptors busily at work restoring the magnificent doorway with its depressed arch, richly sculptured tympanum, and double line of statuettes in the archivolt, by which the Grande Chapelle is entered from the vestibule at the head of the staircase. The

Grande Chapelle, some 60 feet in height, is directly over the Salle de l'Audience (which is often called the Chapelle basse): but it has no central line of pillars, so that its lofty vaultings are seen to even greater advantage. At the south-east corner a door leads into a large room which was used as a robing room in the Tour St. Laurent, the great square tower which Innocent VI. built together with the vast flying-buttress across the rue de la Peyrolierie, to resist the push of the vaulted roof of the Chapel. On the north side is the Pontifical Sacristy. And on entering this the most interesting part of my journey began. For here I reached the private apartments of the Popes who reigned at Avignon.

A narrow passage led into the Garde Robe, a square room in the tower of the same name built by Clement VI., whose walls are decorated with curious frescoes admirably restored of late, representing scenes of country life and sport, hunting, hawking, shooting with the bow and arrow, and fishing with a landing-net. A fine frieze of coats of arms runs above the frescoes; and the heavily beamed ceiling is also elaborately painted. From here a winding turret stair led up to the second floor, and the Pope's bedroom and private rooms—all of them very small—in the Tour des Anges,



SALLE DE L'AUDIENCE. PALAIS DES PAPES

reached only both from above and below by the narrowest of passages, and winding stairs so narrow as to be easily defended by one or two armed men—giving one an uncanny sense of secrecy and need of protection against possible surprise. In fact one realized more strongly than ever before that this palace was indeed a well-furnished fort, whose inhabitants were always on the alert against attacks and danger from without, and possibly from within.

Onwards through empty resounding barrack rooms built up in the fine eastern Aile du Consistoire, which were once a grand hall decorated by Matteo Giovanetti of Viterbo above the *salle du Consistoire*, we reached the *Tour St. Jean* with its two chapels one above the other, its walls being over two yards thick. The lower chapel dedicated to St. John Baptist is decorated with frescoes of his life and that of St. Peter, which are in fairly good preservation and are attributed to Simone Memmi, but are probably the work of a pupil.

The upper chapel of St. Martial is reached by a little wooden gallery hanging out over the lofty walls and the perpendicular cliff below. And after seeing the interior with its frescoes—much defaced—of the life of St. Martial, bishop of

Limoges, which were painted by order of Clement VI. who was a Limousin himself, I begged the guide—who was becoming more and more exasperated at my leisurely and interested progress, inarticulate over my many questions, and evidently impatient to go and find other visitors—to leave me to examine the frescoes and look at the marvellous view in peace. For it was a view in a thousand that lay mapped out below the little gallery hanging in mid-air, over the brown roofs of the crowded city, the great sweeps of the Rhône through the fertile plain with the slopes of Mt Ventoux closing it in on the north-east; while at the foot of the great rock some 200 feet below me, the barrack yard was all that remained of the Pope's garden, once a thing of beauty.

When, however, I attempted to go back by the way I had come, I began to repent of my desire for solitude. It was plain sailing at first; though in those vast resounding rooms—where here and there a comic and not altogether discreet sketch on the white-washed walls told of the French soldier's sojourn—the sound of my own footsteps was not a little disconcerting. But presently on one of the narrow winding turret stairs I could not for the life of me recollect whether it was the

one I had been on before, and whether, if so, I ought to go up or down. I tried up at first, and soon decided that was wrong, for I seemed nearing the roof. Then I tried down, and found it led into unknown depths. And haunted by the strange histories of this strangest of all places, I began to get as much alarmed as the "Mule du Pape" when the rascally Tistet Védène made her climb the narrow stairs of the Tour Campanie. Poor dear "mule du Pape, qui garda sept ans son coup de pied," how I sympathized with her anger against her tormentor. But unfortunately it was my own self and not Tistet Védène who was to blame this time. So once again I turned upwards, and seeing the doorway that in my confusion I had overlooked, I soon found myself among the hawking and fishing scenes of the Garde Robe and knew I was safe. But it is an eerie place, this Palais des Papes, when one is all alone. And when I had gone the empty length of the Grande Chapelle, the sight of a General and his staff coming in to visit the building and the white-bloused masons at work on the great doorway was more than welcome.

CHAPTER X

NOTRE DAME DES DOMS AND LE PONT D'AVIGNON

Sept. 12.

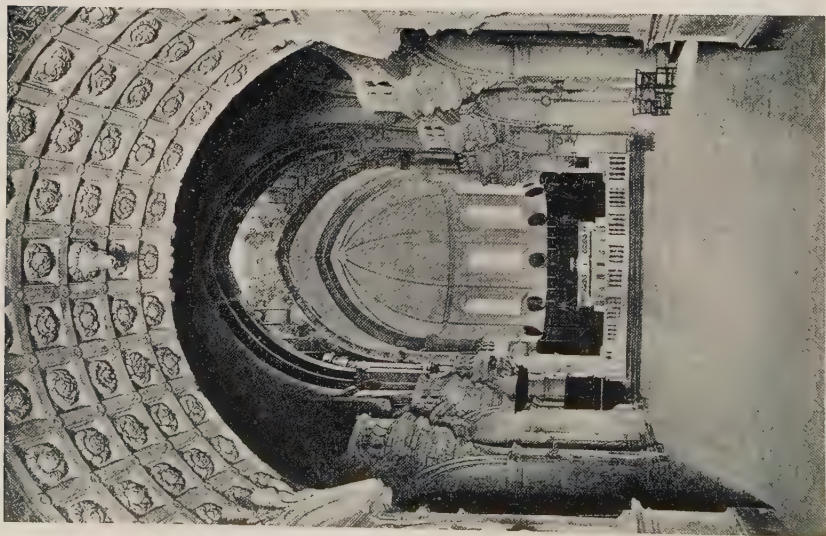
HIGH MASS at Notre Dame des Doms at ten this morning was a contrast to that in most of the other Cathedrals; for it was very quiet,—only one priest officiating—very few present, and as sad as was the lowering sky outside. But I discovered later on that the Cathedral is little frequented save by a few old people, a girls' school, and tourists; for the Avignonnais prefer going to their parish churches, which are always well filled with worshippers. In fact the whole building, except the great chapel on the left of the choir, strikes one as being looked on more as one of the “monuments historiques” with which alas! it is now classed, than as a centre of the faith.

Notre Dame des Doms (*de Dominis*) was already used as the Cathedral of Avignon before the advent of the Popes—a Romanesque building

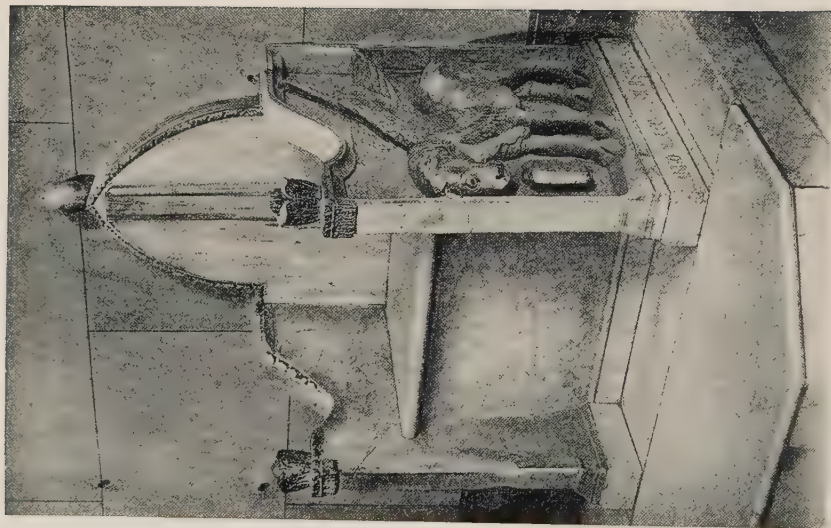
of the 12th century upon the site of a 10th century church. And this earlier church was, it is supposed, built on the site of a Roman temple. But when Charles Martel in 737 burnt Avignon, during his fierce reprisals for the tolerance its inhabitants showed to the Saracenic occupation, almost every trace of Roman buildings disappeared. And now, curiously enough in so important a Roman Colony as Avenio, no Roman remains are to be seen save a few arcades in the rue de la Petite-Fusterie, and even these I have failed to find.

The Porch of the Cathedral was long supposed to have been part of an actual Roman building, with its fluted Corinthian pillars, triangular pediment, and round-headed arch. But it has now been conclusively proved that it is an early and skilful imitation of Classic work anterior to the main 12th century building, as the construction and other details are clearly not Roman. The 12th century building is a Romanesque basilica, with, as is so often the case in Southern Romanesque, a cupola between the nave and the apse supported by pendentives and decorated with ancient paintings, beneath an octagonal lantern. The barrel roof is pointed, while the arches along the lateral walls are round-headed. But

unfortunately this beautiful building has been altered and added to at various periods. In the 14th century the range of chapels were added forming a sort of second aisle on the north ; while a passage leading through to the palace, was turned into the present chapel on the south which contains the very fine 14th century Gothic tomb of Pope John XXII. The handsome white marble tribunes running along the walls of the nave, which are in striking contrast to the severity of the Romanesque building, were designed by Pierre Mignard, Louis Quatorze's famous painter, during his seven months' sojourn with his brother Nicholas in Avignon in 1657 on his way back from Rome. How leisurely were the journeys, even of court painters, in those days. Mignard had spent twenty years in Rome, when Louis XIV. recalled him hurriedly to France. But he was taken ill at Marseilles ; and spent seven or eight months at Avignon before he journeyed on to Fontainebleau. There, however, he made up for lost time, as he painted a portrait of the king in three hours, to be sent to Spain to the Infanta whom Louis XIV. was to marry. One of his own pictures and others by his brother Nicholas may be still seen in the Cathedral if one is lucky enough to get any light ; for Notre Dame



INTERIOR, NOTRE DAME DES DOMS, AVIGNON



THE PAPAL THRONE, CATHEDRAL, AVIGNON

des Doms is almost the darkest church I have ever been in.

An object even more interesting than the elaborate Gothic tomb of Pope John XXII., or the simple and stately one of Benedict XII. in the side chapel near the door, is the fine papal throne, a chair of white marble "which was formerly fixed at the back of the sanctuary; it is now placed at the right of the altar, and still serves, I believe, as the episcopal seat. This throne dates from the 12th century, and is very beautiful in composition and in workmanship. On one side the lion of St. Mark is sculptured, on the other the ox of St. Luke. The influence of the antique is again perceived in this seat, as it is in the architecture of Provence at this period."¹

Big thunder drops fell as we came out; the great view from the steps over miles and miles of the country to the west beyond the Rhône was wrapped in the leaden grey of a coming storm; and I hurried home to a pouring day. It was made all the worse by a fête under my window in the rue du Limas all hung across with strings of little coloured flags, where, despite the rain, small bombs were let off continually

¹ Viollet-le-Duc, "Dict. of Architecture."

in most disturbing fashion to an accompaniment of shrieks and yells from the admiring populace, much to the annoyance of myself and the nest of martins. I asked Madame what it was all about.

“But only a *fête du quartier!*” was the reply.

I then suggested it would probably be over to-night—“Ah! but no! not for two or three days; and then there will be another somewhere else.”

A truly delightful prospect.

At about five the rain ceased: and I hastened forth for a breath of the cool and much refreshed air, by the Porte de l'Oulle close by—or rather the opening in the walls where the gate once stood, for it was so narrow it had to be demolished to suit modern traffic—and thence across the boulevard and out on the big suspension bridge. The view which there disclosed itself took me completely by surprise, with the Rhône racing and swirling round the rocks piled up at the base of the lofty towers of the bridge. Down stream, to a beautiful turn of the great river, richly wooded banks on either side lay against one pink flush of sunset below the leaden-grey clouds. Up stream rose the ever-amazing mass of the Palace and Cathedral on their



Philippe le Bel's Tower.
Villeneuve les Avignon.

tree-crowned rock, which dropped straight into the river rushing swiftly through the finely-proportioned arches of St. Benezet's ruined bridge. Over silver-green willows and bright-green planes and long lines of grey-green reeds, one caught glimpses of Philippe le Bel's tower and the huge walls of the Fort St. André on the opposite bank. While all was backed by the sombre blue-purple slopes of Mt Ventoux in the north-east, its head hidden by a level line of cloud that showed almost white against the mountain side.

Sunday folk passed and repassed. Men with guns slung across their backs and *carnassières* well filled with small birds, alas! or a few partridges which are very plentiful this year. The quaint green and yellow omnibuses of Provence made the long bridge dance and vibrate. Good little slim ponies in country carts trotted by with resounding footsteps. And a finely-bred mule with the lean lively head and slender legs of an Arab, stopped quite untired at the bridge-head with a light cart, to deposit part of its weighty load of five portly *chasseurs* and two handsome pointers. I coveted that mule badly. And as I watched the burly and vociferating sportsmen they seemed to be old friends; for I am verily and indeed in the land that Daudet has made his

own, the land of the immortal Tartarin; and here that valiant hero and Bompard and all the "chasseurs de casquettes" stood before me in the flesh.

The cool air from the Rhône after the stuffy rainy day proved so refreshing, that I wandered on along the boulevard between the ramparts and the river, to take a look at the famous bridge of which we have all heard in nursery days, where

" Sur le Pont d'Avignon
On y danse tout en ronde."

On the muddy flat that here lies between the boulevard and the Rhône, small boys were lighting little fires and apparently cooking the fish they had caught—a fine play-place when the river is low as it is now, but covered with water often enough in the time of flood by that fierce and wayward stream. Gipsies, looking for all the world as if they were my ancient acquaintance the Lees and Gregorys of North Hampshire, were encamped under the walls of the ramparts. And had I been unwise enough to greet them with the very few words of Romany I know, I had no doubt that they would have answered back in the same tongue. But I forbore: for St. Benezet and his bridge were of greater moment than rash linguistic experiments which

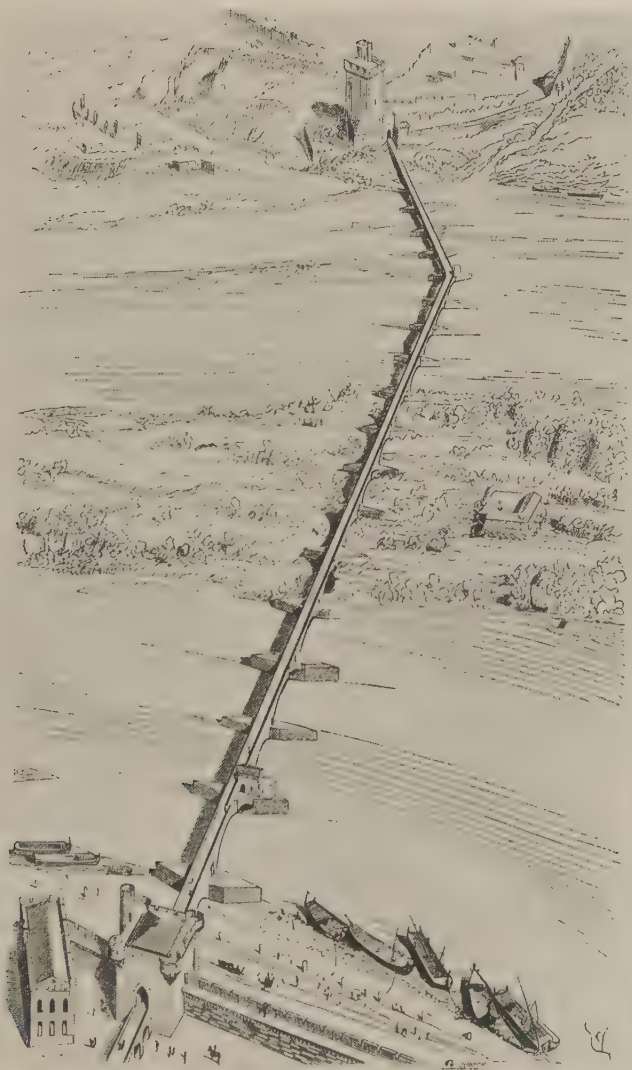
would certainly have brought the whole tribe about me.

Good St. Benezet or Petit Benoit was a shepherd boy, born at Avilar in the Vivarais, so tradition says, who in those solitary hours of silent introspection which belong to the shepherd's life received a revelation from heaven that he must build a bridge across the great river Rhône. When he entered Avignon, full of his divine mission, the townsfolk mocked at the idea that he, "Petit Benoit," should undertake a task which had baffled Julius Cæsar. But the lad declared that God would enable him to succeed where pagans had failed; and he bravely begged the nearest householder to give him something for the love of his bridge. "If it is to be of stone, your bridge, I will give you the stone before my house," the man mockingly replied. This stone, says the legend, was 13 feet long and 7 feet wide. Full of faith, the boy knelt down, made the sign of the cross on the great stone, and praying "*Domine, adjuva me,*" rose and pushed it with all his might, and as it moved he rolled it down to the bank of the Rhône. Thus, says the legend, was the first stone laid of the famous Pont d'Avignon.

Whether the legend is wholly exact or no,

St. Benezet was without doubt one of the chiefs of the confraternity of "Hospitaliers pontifes" instituted in the 12th century, whose mission was to build bridges, establish ferries, and render assistance to travellers on the banks of rivers. St. Benezet and his brave *frères pontifes* as they were called, had a hard task before them when in 1178 they began to build the Pont d'Avignon, one of the greatest of their many beneficent works, which they finished in 1188. For the Rhône is extremely rapid, and above the city it divides into two arms separated by the swampy Île Barthelasse, the narrowest branch which sweeps round the base of the Rocher des Doms and flows past the ramparts, being very deep. The total length of the bridge, which started from the base of the rock and ended at Villeneuve les Avignon on the right bank of the wider branch, is 900 metres. And in order to resist the tremendous floods to which the river is subject, and the violent current sweeping down masses of ice in the winter, the piles from which the arches spring are 30 metres in length, terminating both up and down stream in a sharply-pointed buttress.

The arches were eighteen in number, their width varying from 20 to 25 metres. They are elliptic not circular ; and are composed of four



PONT ST. BÉNÉZET. AVIGNON
PLAN BY VIOLET-LE-DUC

great ribs placed side by side, evidently, according to Viollet-le-Duc, copied from the magnificent model of the Roman Pont du Gard some 15 miles away. On the second pile from the shore a little chapel stands in which the good St. Benezet—whose fête is still celebrated every 14th of April—was buried, until the ruin of great part of the bridge in the 17th century, when his body was removed to the Church of the Celestins.

As this bridge was the only permanent means of communication between the territory of Avignon on the left bank and Languedoc, the French bank of the river, it may be easily understood that it was a fruitful source of dispute between the Kings of France, the Counts of Provence, and the Popes when they became sovereigns of the Comtat Venaissin. And while the Pope built a strong *châtelet* to guard the Avignon end of the bridge, Philippe le Bel retaliated by the lofty tower at Villeneuve les Avignon on the right bank with its strong adjoining fortifications, in order to close the French end of the great bridge against all intruders. But from its very importance the bridge itself was soon to suffer. And during the long siege of the Palais des Papes at the end of the 14th century, the Catalonians cut one of the arches in 1395. In 1418

the Avignonais repaired the broken arch. But from some cause or other another arch gave way in 1610 breaking down two more in its fall; in 1633 and 1670 others fell. And for the last 150 years all that remains of this grand work, which with common care might have been perfect to-day, are the four arches we know joining the city, and a few broken piles across the further branch of the river.

The dining-room was very animated to-night. During the afternoon the 58th Regiment of the line returned to its quarters in Avignon from manœuvres, marching briskly in by the Port de l'Oulle and past the hotel through a perfect deluge of rain. And many officers appeared at dinner.

In the morning Comte and Comtesse —— arrived at the hotel, and I had wondered what made Mme la Comtesse so restless all day, hurrying out to the entrance every ten minutes and evidently keeping an anxious watch for some one or something to appear in the pouring rain. All anxiety had vanished when with a joyous face she came in to dinner, with two very smart officers of high rank, and a slim, well-bred, delicate-looking lad in the rough uniform of a private soldier—her boy! It was the prettiest



St. Bénézet's Bridge, Avignon.

thing to watch the parents' rapture, and the officers' friendly amusement at the boy's enjoyment of his return to civilization and an excellent dinner after the fare of the regimental canteen. Did the bread suit him, or would he prefer another kind? What wine would he like? And a bottle of choice white wine was instantly before him, with which he promptly served his two superiors with whom he was evidently on charming terms of equality. But just as they had settled down comfortably at their table across the room from mine, two officers came in and took their places at one just behind me. In an instant the boy was on his feet stiff as a ramrod, the private soldier again, standing at the salute till "mes officiers" were seated. And this over, he was M. le Vicomte once more, merrily devouring his dinner with parents and friends.

It was rather an interesting little bit of play to watch. And, as I reflected that if there had been no conscription that same lad would probably have been living in idleness and luxury in Paris, instead of gaining health and strength and fine habits of discipline and obedience in his two years' service as a common soldier, I was filled with a great longing that every man in England should likewise be compelled to undergo so great

and beneficial a training of mind and body. For now in France, no one, except from actual physical disability, can escape his two years' service; the *volontariat* and the degrees of *docteur en droit* and others which allowed a man the right of only one year's service, having been abolished in the last three years. Then again there is the twenty-eight days' service which has to be done once in three years. I was asking one of my friends—a well-known art official as well as *homme du monde*—about it the other day in Paris; and he seemed to find it no hardship, but a rather good opportunity for ransacking the old curiosity shops in the remote country town in which he was stationed. And again did I long that Englishmen had to do likewise.



INTERIOR OF THE RAMPARTS. AVIGNON



GATE IN THE RAMPARTS. AVIGNON

CHAPTER XI

STREETS AND LANES OF A CITY

Sept. 13.

THE ramparts, which I have so often longed to see again, since that fleeting glimpse sixteen years ago of their machicolated towers and parapet in the misty dawn from my uneasy couch in the sleeper, are a very old story in Avignon. For ramparts in some shape or other existed before the coming of the Romans in 124 B.C., when Avignon was one of the most powerful cities of the Cavares. The Roman invaders fortified it afresh. But all traces of their dominion disappeared during the disasters of the 8th century under the Saracenic invasion and Charles Martel's terrible reprisals, when Avignon was sacked and burnt. During the more peaceful period which succeeded, Avignon became the capital of the Marquisate of Provence. And when in 1125 she declared herself an independent Consulate, the work of restoration which had been gradually taking

place was completed by new and more extensive ramparts solidly built with strong towers. These ramparts made a wide circle round the city, the Rocher de Doms closing it on the north. And their line may still be traced if one starts from the west of the rock near the Porte du Rhône, and follows the rue du Limas down which we drove this afternoon, the rue Joseph Vernet, rue des Lices, rue Philonarde, rue Campana, and rue des Trois Colombes, back to the rock again on its north-east side. These ramparts, however, were again destroyed in 1227 when Louis VIII. took Avignon. But when the Popes came into possession in 1305 and the city grew in prosperity and magnificence during their sojourn, the "new Rome" as it began to be called—the Avignon we know—needed in its rapid expansion a much wider exterior line of fortifications than in former times to embrace the churches and monasteries, colleges and palaces, gardens and orchards about the Papal court. And Clement VI. (1342-1352) built the ramparts which now exist, as an outwork or second line of defence round the impregnable fortress of the Palace on its rock.

The walls, which are not very high, are flanked by large towers at intervals, nearly all of them

square, and as may be seen in the illustration they are left open to the city on the inner side ; while between them, round or square turrets serve as buttresses to strengthen the walls. And besides these towers, the seven great gates of the city, of which five remain intact, add to the singular picturesqueness of the ramparts—the most complete anywhere in France. A ditch twenty yards wide and fifteen feet deep ran round the walls, paved at the bottom to facilitate the clearing away of mud from the Rhône, Durance, and Sorgues which fed it. But this has now been filled up and turned into a tree-planted boulevard.

Within the encircling ramparts with their seven gates and thirty-nine towers, the city lies clustered thickly at the base of the dominant rock, a labyrinth of tortuous streets and ancient houses, so narrow that when the little country omnibuses or wine carts drawn by mules pass along them, one has to step back off the foot-wide pavement into the first shop door for safety. On the western slope of the rock alone, these narrow streets and flights of steep steps climb up to the Place de l'Hôtel de Ville and the broad esplanade of the palace. Some, such as the rue de la Peyrolierie, or the rue du Vice-légat, are actually

cut to a depth of thirty feet or more through the solid rock at the base of the palace—so narrow and so steep that one can scarcely believe the good little horse in one's fiacre can possibly get down in safety : but he does, and climbs up it again with cat-like agility.

The Place de l'Hôtel de Ville is the centre of Avignon's life to-day, with its cafés deeply shaded by striped awnings, its wide central space of raised pavement surrounded with benches on which idlers sit all day long doing nothing with perfect content, its quaint little open country omnibuses painted green, yellow, and red, on low wheels and drawn by three ponies, which start every half-hour for Villeneuve crowded from morn till night, its electric trams—a most incongruous feature—running down the one broad fairly modern street, the rue de la République, to the Station without the walls and so into the country beyond ; and last but not least in the estimation of some of its citizens, its very exuberant monument of the centenary of the union of Avignon and the Comtat-Venaissin with France in 1791 ; the guardian lion grinning fiercely and “bristling from the points of its moustache to the tip of its tail,” as M. Robida amusingly says. “Symbolic lions are greatly liked in the south ;

the debonnaire north is content on its commemorative monument with a severe but calm lion; these animals go in pairs in the south, or in fours, looking like enormous cats in a rage."

Up one of these steep narrow streets I pass more than once in the day—the rue St. Agricol, leading from the rue Joseph Vernet to the Place de l'Hôtel de Ville. The Church of St. Agricol, patron saint of the city, stands back from it a little space up flights of steps; a great cool dark church wherein to rest for a while out of the glare of the sun and possess one's soul. Founded in 680 by the good Saint; destroyed by the Saracens; and rebuilt by Pope John XXII. in 1331, it is the chief parish church of Avignon, and among other interesting things it contains one of the most magnificent marble *bénitiers* I know.

But it is not the church alone that makes me glad to frequent the rue St. Agricol. For I always find occasion to halt at a modest bookshop on the right, and turn over the piles of old and new volumes outside, till a glimpse of the *cigales*¹ in the window, some real ones stuffed,

¹ The cigale, or cicala, is the badge of the Provençal Society of Félibres.

others modelled in gold or silver, seem to compel me to push aside the hanging screen of reeds and beads over the open doorway and go in on some pretence or other. For over the door one reads the name of Roumanille ; and this modest spot saw the beginning of that extraordinary revival of Provençal poetry some sixty years ago, which is best known by Frédéric Mistral's great poems *Miréio* and *Calendal*. Therefore the little bookshop of the rue St. Agricol is a sort of Mecca not only to every Félibre, but to those who can only lay claim to deep interest in and admiration of all that Roumanille, Aubanel, Cabanel, Mistral, and many lesser lights have done, by reviving the literature and poetry of their own Provence so famous in the days of troubadours and Courts of Love, in its own fine language.

This morning after the usual halt at the bookshop to examine an old print of Avignon taken from the Île Barthelasse, I crossed the Place de l'Hôtel de Ville and wandered down the narrow rue des Marchands, now as in the times of Popes and Legates the centre of business. Since the 58th tramped in yesterday in the soaking rain, the city has so suddenly come to life that it was quite difficult to get along ; for if one tried to

keep on the foot-wide pavement, so did every one else; while the roadway was filled with mule carts, and hurrying little soldiers pushing hand-barrows or carrying *brancards* with provisions, bread, wood, wine barrels, &c.; so that even the officers had to dodge their way hither and thither in most undignified fashion, while mere civilians stood no chance whatever.

At last by strange by-ways among gloomy ancient houses at the foot of the great rock, I found what I sought—the Church of St. Pierre, a *trouvaille* well worth finding. The church was founded in 433, rebuilt in 912 after its destruction by the Saracens, and reconstructed in its present proportions in 1358. But the façade of 1512 is of late and very florid Gothic, with a quaint touch of Roman rather than Renaissance decoration in two empty circular medallions—a wreath tied by many ribbons—on the wall spaces above the central doorway. The handsome Renaissance doors of black walnut, sculptured in high relief by one Volard (1551), are happily in admirable preservation; on one are panels of St. Michael overcoming Lucifer, and St. Jerome, on the other the Annunciation, while Renaissance monsters form the jambs.

The interior is interesting in its decorations.

Among them are a very beautiful Renaissance retable in the last chapel on the left ; and a magnificent 15th century Deposition at the end of the south aisle, life-size figures in marble below a fine and impressive crucifix resting on a skull and serpent. In the Chapel of St. Barbe a collection of relics in their monstrances are now placed ; and here also are the Cardinal's hat and embroidered dalmatic of St. Pierre de Luxembourg in a glass case. The stone pulpit is finely carved, while six little figures round it under delicate Gothic canopies are said to have come originally from the beautiful tomb of Pope John XXII. in the Cathedral ; and its maker's quaint dedication may still be read on it.

" Afin que mieux cest chaire cy
 A Dieu du ciel li soit plaisante
 Jacque Malhe li cry mercy
 Et de bon cœur la lui presente."

As there was an exposition of the Blessed Sacrament it was not possible to examine the panelled choir, its panels covered with a series of pictures by Pierre and Joseph Parrocel divided by handsome gilded Renaissance columns. But it was a pleasure to see this church of the second most important parish in Avignon thoroughly well cared for, when so many of the others have

been desecrated, and are now put to civil or military uses.

In the afternoon we drove in the same direction through a labyrinth of narrow streets which formed the ancient Ghetto, to see the 13th century Tour de St. Jean in the Place Pie—the solitary relic of the great establishment of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem. But this should be seen in the morning when the Place is gay with market stalls and crowded with busy housewives laying in the day's provision of fish and flesh, fruit and vegetables. Thence we drove on by the new rue Thiers down which a tram runs, an odiously modern street such as one might find in any Paris suburb as far as its new houses are concerned: but redeemed from absolute vulgarity by fig trees laden with fruit in every front garden and oleanders in bloom everywhere. By the Porte Thiers we emerged on the encircling boulevards, and drove past the great new barracks up to the Porte St. Lazare which I was curious to see, as it is the best preserved of the mediæval gates. It is on the same plan as all those of Avignon—a square tower open on the side towards the town, and pierced by a large archway which could be closed by two portcullises. This one was further strengthened with a forework protecting the

drawbridge across the ditch. This ditch is now, of course, filled in close to the gateway. But it exists for some distance beyond, outside the ramparts, as the boulevard here runs nearer to the river; and one is thus enabled to gain a good idea of the external aspect of the ramparts before the ditch which defended them was filled up.

A charming avenue of fine trees led us on between the river and the ramparts, past the *port du bois*, which gives its name to the boulevard de la Ligne (*ligno*, wood) under the mighty rock of the Doms, with beautiful views across and up the Rhône. Then passing under one arch of good St. Benezet's bridge we turned into the city by another ancient gate, the Porte du Rhône, and bravely drove down the rue du Limas where the fête was still in full swing. Small girls blew whistles in S.'s face and threw confetti, and we were thankful to escape without bombs, which went on under my window during the night till 1 A.M., while S. was rudely awakened from her first sleep by a Farandole under hers.

THE MUSÉE CALVET

One morning I wandered down the rue Joseph Vernet to the Musée Calvet and had a rare treat there. In 1810, a public-spirited

citizen, Dr. Calvet, bequeathed the whole of his collections of books, pictures, and above all, his Roman antiquities, as well as his fortune to his native city. For Avignon was not included for some reason among the fifteen cities of France in which, by Napoleon's famous decree while First Consul, museums were organized—a decree of far-reaching importance to modern art too often forgotten nowadays. Avignon has proved itself worthy of the good doctor's munificence; and his collections have been continually augmented until the museum is one of the best in the provinces. It is installed in a fine 18th century house *entre cour et jardin*, in whose spacious courtyard many of the larger Roman and Mediæval monuments are arranged. But the more remarkable antiquities are found within. Among those in the vestibule is a headless but very exquisite statue—a Venus—found at Pourrières in 1886, the soft firm flesh slightly veiled on the back and from the waist downwards by transparent and graceful drapery. Close by, in singular contrast to this lovely goddess, stands a hideous “Guerrier Gaulois” in coat of mail with a shield—an unkempt savage who could scarcely, one imagines, have been possessed of that Gallic wit that France is supposed to have derived

from such ancestry. A decapitated Gaulish Jupiter is also interesting. But some of the gems of the collection are a very perfect Roman altar $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet high, from Vaison, with a cock and a pig sculptured on the side and a cross in front; and two large and very fine bas-reliefs also from Vaison, one of a chariot with two horses "harnessed with traces and shod"; the other a Sacrifice of the Bull. Huge wine or oil jars 4 or 5 feet high, stand below and on the landings of the staircase. But when I found my way to the collection of smaller Roman antiquities on the first floor the interest became absorbing; all the more so that I made bold to introduce myself to delightful M. Binoy, the director, and found him nothing loth to show me the treasures, many of which were discovered by his father, the first director, and by himself in later days. And with this kindly gentleman, and a distinguished French *savant*, Monsieur H. L. who happened also to be visiting the Museum, I spent a delightful hour.

The collection of Roman glass is considered unique in France; and many of the finely coloured and gracefully shaped pieces are as fresh and perfect as if they had come yesterday from the furnaces of Murano. These precious

specimens are arranged in one large glass case. And when all Avignon was startled by the disastrous Salins earthquake last June (1909), the shock was so severe that poor M. Binoy, whose first thought was for his Roman glass, felt convinced that these delicate treasures, which had survived war and flood and fire and burial underground for long centuries, must now be utterly destroyed. What were his amazement and delight when he flew to see the supposed destruction, to find that only the neck of one tiny lachrymatory was broken; while two bowls had shifted their position along the shelf some 4 inches. These three pieces he has left untouched as a memento of the event.

The greater part of these collections have been found at various times in or near Vaison, that rich treasure ground of antiquities, which was once an important Roman settlement where many patricians had their villas, and now is a little townlet of barely 3000 inhabitants some fifteen miles from Orange below the slopes of Mt Ventoux.¹ Here M. Binoy's father made excavations with great success, before Vaison became as well known as a happy hunting ground for archæologists as it is now. From

¹ See p. 289.

his boyhood his son assisted him; and some of his stories of the ruses they adopted to carry off their treasures under the very noses of other collectors are highly diverting.

It was in 1838 that M. Binoy the elder discovered the singularly perfect little square tomb of Roman pottery, which to me seemed one of the most vividly interesting of all these antiquities. For it is the tomb of a father, mother, son and daughter at the close of the 1st and beginning of the 2nd centuries. It contains their four funeral urns, four lachrymatories, four lamps, four small jars, coins, &c.; and the smallest urn, that of the little girl, was found covered by her mirror. The coins found with each urn show that the first member of the family died in the time of Agrippa, the second under Domitian, the third under Trajan, and the fourth under Antoninus Pius. So perfect a little bit of history contained in a pottery tomb some 2 feet square, seemed to bring one very close to the Patrician family of Vaison.

Still closer to another Patrician household did one come—but this time in life not in death—before the perfect and almost unique bronze *batterie de cuisine*, found in 1886 in a well 15 feet deep on the property of M. Reboulin.

Here one sees every vessel needed in the kitchen of a wealthy villa of the 2nd or 3rd century ; for such bronze cooking vessels were a great luxury at the time. Among them, a very beautiful hanging lamp with an inscription and fine sculpture below is quite Greek in style. Even the household god is here, sculptured in stone, a very naughty faun with laughing eyes, who looks all the more disreputable as one of his horns has been broken. This is the only injury to be seen in the whole collection, which must have been gathered together hastily to preserve it from some sudden danger, fire, war, or rebellion which overtook the owners and necessitated instant flight. And that they never returned is evident, as their precious *batterie de cuisine* lay undisturbed for some 1700 years in its hiding-place, only to be found like truth in 1886.

The small bronzes fill many cases round the walls of this treasure-house. In one is a very graceful tripod $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet high, along with seals, rings, and thimbles ; gold rings also, a large crystal seal ring, and red glass dice, the pips being in white with a black centre. Three cases are filled with small bronze figures. In one the art is very debased. In another mostly coarse

and ugly, save a fine little head of Jupiter on a small altar in dove-grey onyx. Another contains comic figurines and busts, where one may see the little caricature of Caracalla as a "marchand de petits patés" which, as Merimée said, is a chef d'œuvre, proving that "in France the exquisite sentiment of ridicule has always existed." Another contains bronze birds, animals and fish, among them plunging dolphins full of life and vigour.

It was hard to tear oneself away from so delightful a museum and such pleasant company, when I found that luncheon time was long passed.

Let no one imagine he has "seen" Avignon in a day's visit. One must be there for many days even to begin to know the charm of quiet evenings on the great bridge as the sun sets, each giving one a fresh phase of the beautiful scene up and down the noble river, with the Palace and Cathedral and tree-capped Rocher des Doms in radiant golden light or stern severity of shade dominating the whole of "Gothic Avignon." Or the curious by-streets that can only be explored on foot, with here a bay and a huge Judas tree, its branches fringed with ruddy brown seed-pods below the round green leaves,



DOORWAY, HÔTEL BARONCELLI-JAVON. AVIGNON
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looking over the wall of some courtyard ; there a monumental Louis Quatorze doorway, such as that at the corner of the rue Dorée and the rue des Ortolans, or the beautiful Gothic door of the Hôtel Baroncelli-Javon (see illustration). Or a tilt-covered gateway with solid wooden doors, and tall stone pillars surmounted by stone vases wreathed with bright yellow-green trails of *Wistaria* and a vine covered with purple fruit. And then there are quaint chance meetings that a leisurely sojourn yield, such as one that befel us.

It is not easy to get a good view, or indeed any at all except from a great distance, of the eastern façade of the Palais des Papes with its seven towers ; for the crowded houses cluster so close to the base of the perpendicular cliff on which it stands, and the streets are so narrow that it is almost impossible to get a glimpse of the palace when one is in them. It might be non-existent for aught one sees. One afternoon, however, I determined to try and find some opening from which we could look up at the whole eastern side. So S. and I made our way from the charming gardens of the Rocher des Doms down the great stone Escalier de Ste. Anne, built and cut down the face of the rock itself, with the gloomy Tour de Trouillas towering

overhead. When at last we arrived at the bottom of the steps between high walls that shut out every chance of view, I espied a quaint little street, the *rue du Fond du Sac*, that turned to the right and might, I thought, lead to the barrack yard below the Rock which was once the Pope's garden. Sure enough at a turn a few yards up it we saw the open gates of the barrack yard before us, guarded by two young private soldiers—their gay red trousers showing beneath the buttoned-back skirts of their long blue greatcoats. They were larking with some small boys, one of whom had thrown his ball into the yard and wanted to get in after it.

"There!" I said pretty audibly to S., "that is the very place I wanted to find. I'll see if they will give us leave to go in."

So we boldly advanced upon the young privates; and with a little bow I said to one of them, who had a particularly bright intelligent face with merry black eyes,

"Est-il permis d'entrer? Je voudrais bien voir le Palais de ce côté-ci?"

"Oh! yes! you can come in," came the answer, in careful, but excellent English. And I was so completely taken aback that the proverbial feather might have knocked me down.

"Do you speak English?" I gasped.

"Oh! yes! but *verrie* lit-tel," my friend replied. And as he courteously led us in, and I explained why I so wished to see the palace from this point of view (it was indeed magnificent and impressive), he went on, "If you will go out again and round these houses, you will find anozer gate, and you will be able to get closer."

"But where *did* you learn English?" I exclaimed at last; for it seemed extraordinary to me that a very young private in a line regiment should know it so well.

"Oh! in ze Collège"—was the answer; and light dawned upon me.

"Ah! maintenant je comprends, *Monsieur*," I said. "Merçi mille fois de votre amabilité."

And when I had bidden my pleasant young friend farewell and was out of hearing, I turned to S. who was as much amazed as I had been at hearing her native tongue in a French barrack yard, and said "Why, he is a gentleman—doing his two years' service!"

Who that stops between trains, or even rushes in for a night in the best of automobiles, only to rush on somewhere else next morning, the great car packed with luncheon-baskets and people who only care to say they have "done" Avignon, and

who whirl away through the ancient gates of the ancient ramparts blowing "Gabriel Horns"—who, I say, of such tourists can know the delight of these days of small things that bring one nearer the heart of France—France in the past—France in the present?

CHAPTER XII

ORANGE

Sept. 14.

THE air this morning when I woke was delightfully fresh ; for the odious sultry sirocco which has made life rather intolerable for the last few days has gone. The little strings of flags across the street below my window were fluttering in quite another fashion, and shutters were beginning to clatter, and windows to blow open suddenly, and doors to bang—not violently but with a cheerful activity and sense of life ; and I felt certain that if the mistral had not already arrived it was coming, to sweep away all that was *venenosa* in *Avenio ventosa*. So to Orange we would go, after an early luncheon.

As we steamed out of Avignon northwards once more, the Palais des Papes rose grandly on its rock above the city ; and great fig trees grew in every garden in the outskirts above hedges of brilliant orange-berried Cotoneaster—what a delightful use it would be to make of that excellent shrub at home. Then as we reached the

open country came long rows of sheltering cypress, many evergreen oaks, and a fine view of Mt Ventoux nearly clear of cloud for the first time.

Why do guide-books talk of the wide plain of the Rhône below Orange as a sort of desert supporting nothing but "a few olives and willows"? Olives rise out of stubble fields which a month ago were waist-deep in golden corn; mulberries out of hay-meadows just shorn of their second crop and preparing for a third; while vineyards are to be seen everywhere.

A nimble mistral was making the tops of the poplars and the cypress spires bend gracefully towards the South. And everything looked as gay as proved the pair of lively little horses we had found at the station with a good carriage, when we drove up the beautiful avenue of planes to Orange. The planes are just shedding their bark, and the stems and branches where it has peeled off show cream-colour—the softest imaginable cream-colour—against the rich, very bright-green foliage. A little stream ran on the right between the road and the houses with tiny bridges across it to each gate; and figs and oleanders, peaches and almonds filled every garden along the water-side. Then came a turn to the right



Arc de Triomphe, Orange.

beyond the octroi. And down the long vista of a street lined with trees stood the great pale golden Arch, while through it the white road and its avenue of young planes went on and on as far as eye could see to the far distant hills in the north.

As long as I live, that straight white road and its sparse plane-trees and the far blue hills framed in the golden Arch that was built some 1800 years ago, will never fade from my eyes. It will remain among those very precious visions which live for ever in one's memory, clear and perfect as fine cut cameos. The Peak of Orizaba at 4 A.M. its everlasting snow faintly pink with the first rays of day while we still shivered in the shadows of night, and on the edge of the deep gulf filled with blue mist beneath us a single aloe standing, its huge flower-spike rising hard and scarlet against the pale snow. The Taj Mahal in the sunset seen from the Jumna below its walls. Or six o'clock one early autumn morning, the sun just risen, the mist floating away with long "fils de la Vierge" over the wide valley, while the hounds worked on the slope below us in the copper bracken and pink-purple heather. Or one pale golden branch of a green elm on the Cam, set in the archway of King's. Or—but why go on? We all have

our private picture-galleries, precious to ourselves but tedious to others. And to these and many another, this little journey has already added my first sight of the Palais des Papes; and now the white road beyond the pale gold Roman Arch has joined that choice collection.

As the little Temple of Livia and Augustus at Vienne was my first Roman temple, so is this my first Triumphal Arch. But it was the startling effect of the straight white road through the deep-shadowed central archway, that has for ever graven it upon my mind's eye.

What does it matter, save to the pedant, when it was built, by whom, or in memory of what victory? Let antiquarians dispute or pedants applaud their wranglings, when they fight over the question of whether it was built under Tiberias in A.D. 21, or whether on account of the "superfluity of ornaments, their pretentious character, the degeneration of the profils," it bears the imprint of the 2nd century. It is enough for the ordinary mortal to set all these vain babblings aside and give himself up to sheer enjoyment of its stately proportion, and its delicious colour—more the tone of ripe barley than of wheat;—to watch the mermaids curling their tails above the pediment, the trophies and captives between the graceful



FAÇADE OF THE THEATRE. ORANGE



ARC DE TRIOMPHE. ORANGE

Corinthian columns of the east side ;—to examine with delight the rich decoration of the north front ; its vigorously designed ships' prows, masts, and oars ; its trophies of shields, armour, and fasces, that fill the spaces over the side arches and the entablature ; the fine bas-relief of a battle on the upper panel ; the beautiful wreath of pomegranates in the archivolt of the central arch ; and the elaborate design on its vault. It is a noble monument. And though vilely ill-used in the past, enough of it remains to give artist and humble traveller equal and exquisite pleasure.

But the so-called "restoration" of the west side is to my mind quite unworthy of the praise bestowed on it by Mr MacGibbon and other learned writers. It was necessary to rebuild that portion. But why should the restorer place Corinthian capitals of his own extremely bad design on the columns, when he had such perfect models before him on the east and north sides ? They are not even of exactly the same proportions as the originals. Far better, if he was incapable of close imitation, to have left them merely blocked out after the constant practice of the Roman builder, as may be seen at Vienne, Nîmes and elsewhere.

How that even as much of the Arch as we

now see should have escaped destruction is a miracle, when one remembers that in the 13th century Raymond des Baux made use of it as part of a fortress; and that during the successive dynasties of Counts and Princes of Orange the Roman Arch bore its share of troubles, till Louis XIV., who took possession of the city in 1660, determined that Orange should no longer be the stronghold of resistance it had proved for centuries, but a "ville ouverte," and razed its elaborate fortifications and finally destroyed its castle.

The Arc de Triomphe is almost enough for one day's thought. But the Roman Theatre sweeps everything else from one's mind, gigantic in size and yet more impressive in its grandeur of conception. I had caught a glimpse of it from the train coming down from Valence, dominating the little town and dwarfing every other building. But when we emerged from the curious narrow arcaded streets, hung across with draperies from roof to roof to keep off the blinding sun, and reached the open square before it, I was wholly unprepared for the actual size of the huge façade. The great wall, forming the back of the stage (*scena*) towered above us, a cliff of stone of the same soft golden barley-colour as the Arch, but here deepened in tone, and browned and blackened

in places by fire. The utter simplicity of design enhances the grandeur of its effect. Its lower range of round-headed arcades with three square-headed doors, bear traces of the marble pilasters placed between them. Higher up is a second arcade, also bereft of marble pilasters. And above run two striking lines of bold projecting corbels, which carried the masts supporting the *velarium* over the stage. Those in the upper row are pierced with holes through which the masts ran and rested on the lower row; and in the cornice above, one can yet see smaller holes through which the ropes and pulleys were passed.

In this towering cliff-like wall one seemed really to have touched the ultimate limit of interest. But when we followed the kindly old gardien through the open doorway and down a flight of steps, finding ourselves actually on the stage of the theatre within, with range upon range of the grey and white marble seats of the hemicycle rising before us up to the rough rock and burnt hillside above out of which the auditorium was fashioned, even the wonder of the façade was eclipsed. And as we sat and collected our wits in the shade on some of the antique marble *gradins*—for it was easy to choose an old and

not a restored one—the 20th century seemed far less real than the 1st.

Despoiled and disfigured; scarred by fire; used by the Princes of Orange as an advanced bastion of their great castle on the adjoining hill; with only here and there a marble pillar on the side walls to give a notion of what its magnificence must have been—the great building remains a perfectly unique example of the life of Roman Gaul. For here is the antique stage, here is the proscenium, here is the orchestra still. There in the advanced buildings on each side of the stage are the remains of the artists' rooms, stairways, entrances: and up above in the wall we see the holes for the huge supporting beams of a wooden roof, which at a later period of the Roman occupation replaced the velarium.

It was very good to sit still for awhile on those marble gradins, as Romans must have sat 2000 years ago, and just absorb the wonderful place undisturbed. For the good old gardien was fully occupied with the Mayor or some such local dignitary and a party of friends he had brought, whose pretty little children flitted up and down the deep steps of the stairway between each block of seats. So that we were left to ourselves to picture Mounet Sully playing *Œdippe Roi* on



A PLAY BY THE COMÉDIE FRANÇAISE IN THE THEATRE, ORANGE

that famous occasion in 1898, when the Comédie Française gave its first performance on the Roman stage of Orange, and the great actor's every word was heard distinctly all over the enormous auditorium, so perfect are its acoustics. Never can actors have played on a more inspiring stage, or with a more strange and exquisite setting—the huge weather-beaten wall for background, and for side-scenes masses of figs, myrtles, acacias, pomegranates and oleanders, growing in the gardien's little garden. To-day the great groups of oleanders were smothered in blossom, pale pink and crimson, mingled with the polished leaves of a pomegranate among whose ripe fruit the fiery points of a few late flowers shone like living flame; while beside them on a big fig-tree the little purple figs were bursting open with crimson ripeness, tempting bird and wasp and man alike. Was there ever so rare and classic a set scene for a classic tragedy?

We slowly made our way up the nearest stairway between the seats; each pair of steps was cut out of one block of stone, but even so they were too high for comfortable progress. And from the promenade at the top of the first tier we passed through one of the doorways into the great

couloir below the upper tier, and thence up a corresponding stairway to the open air again at the top of the gradins. Another couloir and steps, below what was once the topmost tier of seats, now in ruins, brought us out with a scramble among the rocks of the hillside. And we stopped panting to gaze upon the magnificent view of the theatre beneath us, and beyond its ruined walls looked over the brown roofs and towers of the town to the wide stretch of plain between the Rhône on the west and Mt Ventoux on the east. I longed as I looked at the panorama spread out before me, that time and strength had allowed us to penetrate to all that lies in that wide plain—to Vaison and Carpentras, to Pernes and famed Vaucluse, and on beyond to Cavaillon and Orgon—all so full of interest to antiquarian, to historian, to artist.

On the walls and among the rocks grew the pretty little purple-grey sage, and the small yellow Chieranthus that one finds on every spot frequented by the Romans throughout the country. I do not know whether the little plants are merely indigenous, or whether the Romans brought them—probably in the fodder of their horses—to Gaul, as they brought other plants—such as one of the Cranesbills—to England. But in every Roman

ruin I have seen in this journey, one is certain to find the yellow *Chieranthus*.

When at last, making our way down the high steps of the gradins and passing the fairy-like mass of pink oleander blossom and the tempting fig-tree, we went through the lofty archway at the side of the theatre to the great circus that adjoined it, we found workmen busily repairing its walls and arches. The hovels that gradually grew up within the circus have happily been nearly all cleared away; for not only were they a disfigurement, but an actual danger to its existence. In fact the only wonder is that the great walls did not fall on the intruders, who built their dwellings against them and in some instances cut nearly through them to make a cupboard or enlarge a room.

Then, well supplied with photographs from the gardien's little lodge, we turned with regret from the splendid theatre, in search of other remains of the Roman occupation which are to be found in all directions, here an arch across the street, there a column or capital or bit of wall or doorway built into, I was going to say, a modern house. But modern houses in the usual sense are few and far between in Orange. Everything seems old; the strange low arcades, the narrow

streets where through an open doorway one catches glimpses of mediæval courtyards with a charming tourelle, or a carved balustrade and door. And when our coachman proposed to take us a mile out into the country to see one of the really important sights of the place—"une belle maison de campagne" which Monsieur Somebody-or-other had just built—it seemed a scandal merely to mention that such things can exist.

Therefore, conceding to his wishes so far as to allow him to show us the modern statue of Raimbaud 2nd count of Orange who was killed at the siege of Antioch in 1099, a fairly respectable date, we decided we had done enough sight-seeing, and that exhausted nature needed refreshment before we started home. The *pastèques* in the only baker's shop were so uninviting, that we made our way to one of the two little rival hotels in the street leading to the Arc de Triomphe, which stand opposite each other like Daudet's "Deux Auberges." And pushing aside the inevitable reed and bead "chicks" which abound here and remind one curiously of an Indian Bungalow, I roused the somnolent and astonished lady in the bureau with a humble request for food. An equally astonished waiter came in response to her calls and took us into a large and stifling dining-room, hermetically



GATEWAY OF THE ROMAN CIRCUS. ORANGE

closed as to light and air, with a rich odour of the late midday table d'hôte, and as full of flies as that of Daudet's poignant little story. He seemed to think us quite mad when I begged him to open a window—"Mais la poussière! Impossible d'ouvrir! Il fait du vent"!—and yet more so when I demanded "little breads and butter"—always a safe form of food in France. However he condescended to humour my eccentricities by opening a shutter to let in a little light; and presently provided us with the primitive food that has satisfied mankind from remote ages—hard long bread, good butter, and white wine of the country. And being very tired we thankfully took what we could get: and then walked leisurely down the plane-tree avenue, past the little stream and its bridges and gardens, to the station.

CHAPTER XIII

VILLENEUVE-LES-AVIGNON

Sept. 16.

IT was a grilling afternoon as in a cloud of white dust I drove across the long, long bridges that unite Provence and Languedoc. For the suspension bridge is but part of the bridging that is needed to carry the roadway over the two branches of the Rhône, and the Île Barthelasse with its bowling-alleys and little restaurants and swampy meadows—where sheep and cattle feed among poplars and willows and millions of mosquitoes breed merrily—upon which one looks down from the causeway raised on lofty piles. A handsome new stone bridge is being built to replace the old wooden bridge across the wide and shallow west branch of the river, the design being excellently in keeping with that of the ramparts. And meanwhile all traffic, smothered and choking in the thick white dust, goes at a foot's pace along a resounding wooden erection on massive piles over the swamp and the rapid river.

As we touch terra firma on the high, rocky further bank of the Rhône we are in Languedoc. And turning to the right under the lofty rocks and the quarries that are eating them up, Philippe le Bel's great tower of defiance and defence rises close before us on its cliff of cream and violet-grey limestone. The ruined piles of good St. Benezet's bridge that it guarded, lie out in the sand and shingle stretches of the shallow right branch of the river. And Avignon, its Palace of the Popes, its Cathedral des Doms—all clear cut in creamy-yellow lights and sharp blue shadows—lifts its proud profile over the poplars and willows of the island, the golden statue of Our Lady gleaming in the afternoon sun.

Houses, high-perched on the rock above us, built into and upon the old fortifications, with overhanging balconies gay with flowers, were outlined against the blue sky overhead. Then the road wound on across the valley that lies between the tower and Villeneuve with its huge fort, with a long line of tall Lombardy poplars and little fruit gardens on the right between the road and the river, all powdered white with dust from the ever-passing traffic of country carts, carriages, motors, cyclists, and little green and yellow omnibuses; and more gardens and the brown-roofed

town beyond them upon the left. A moment more and we are at Villeneuve, our progress barred by a long country cart on two wheels piled high with brown baskets of purple grapes. Lo! the vintage has indeed begun! It turns its narrow, unwieldy length into a doorway, and we trot on, past the church, through the sunny Place, up the Grand' rue, where through sculptured doorways bearing the arms of Cardinal and Prince and great noble, we catch glimpses of arcaded courtyards and vaulted passages. And then a turn into a steep way leads up to a magnificent gateway—the entrance to the Charreusse du Val de Bénédiction.

It is a strange and attractive place that lies within that gateway; a village of the poorest, grown up in the ruins of Papal magnificence. For although Languedoc and its kings watched their neighbours the Popes across the river with a jealous eye at times; yet the Popes and Cardinals made great use of Villeneuve, building villas and palaces therein to which they came as country residences. And during the terrible plague of 1360, when one out of every three souls in Avignon died, the Papal Court took refuge at Villeneuve, and escaped without hurt in what Innocent VI. called his *Val de*



Ancient Palace of Cardinal de Turin.
Villeneuve les Avignon.



ENTRANCE TO THE CHARTREUSE. VILLENEUVE-LES-AVIGNON



CORNER IN THE CHARTREUSE. VILLENEUVE-LES-AVIGNON

Bénédiction. It was in gratitude for this preservation that he built the Chartreuse.

The official custodian appeared the moment we halted outside the great gateway, and proved to be an unusually civil and intelligent specimen of a race I do not generally delight in. And as I was happily the only visitor, he was quite willing to let me go my own way in his strange domain—ruined yet swarming with life. At the very first turn we came upon a delicious corner outside the great church of the Chartreuse, the remains of the porch (see illustration) crowned with iris, and the doorway of a cottage in the building joining it overshadowed with a graceful vine whose branches were plentifully hung with bunches of purple grapes; while from the darkness of an arched passage beside it a little maiden tripped down gnawing a huge slice of water melon, and I wished for an artist to paint so charming a bit of colour and composition. Up through that same arched passage we made our way to the Upper Cloisters, a wide open space now used as a sort of general drying-ground, garden, and play-place by the many inhabitants of the ruined Chartreuse, round the charming eight-arched Fontaine de St. Jean and an ancient well with wrought-iron fittings beside it, while remains of

the arcaded promenoir are still visible on the surrounding walls. A gracefully vaulted couloir led down from this to the lower cloister (for the strange place is built on the side of a steep slope, and is full of ups and downs) and the Grande Salle, now alas! open to the sky; while the Chapelle du Pape at its further end is occupied by a manure heap and a rough enclosure for goats and donkeys. But the beautiful little Chapelle réservée of the Carthusians just beyond has happily escaped the general destruction, and is now in safe keeping under the department of Beaux Arts and society of Monuments historiques. In the midst of such ruin on every side it is a pleasant surprise to find this little gem, the exquisite five-lobed apse covered with frescoes dedicated to St. John the Baptist, while even the ribs of the roof are richly decorated.

Another open space near by was formerly the cemetery; and there, at the doors of what had once been lofty handsome buildings with carven doorways and fine staircases, poor peasant women sat drying millet for brooms, the bundles of orange-red stalks stacked in the sun beside an ancient mulberry tree, while vines grew over every door and the blue sky blazed overhead. Another long vaulted couloir took us into the inner cloister,



THE RUINED CHURCH. VILLENEUVE-LES AVIGNON
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exquisitely vaulted and arcaded, with oleanders, vines, mulberry, fig, and pink roses peeping through the arches from a little garden in the centre—a delicious spot of which the good custodian was justly proud, for it was his own garden. And when I begged to be allowed to enter his little Eden, and he discovered that I too was a gardener and was longing for a flower in this strangely flowerless southern land, he filled my hands with oleander blossoms and pink roses, and would have even cut his Marvels of Peru and other annuals had I not sternly prevented such reckless generosity.

This cloister is the one spot in the vast enclosure of the ruined Chartreuse which has needed little or no restoration. The great *salle du Chapitre* opens on it at one side; and on the other, joining the great church, is a circular domed *lavabo*, where a beautiful marble basin was supplied with water which flowed from the Fontaine de St. Jean. One aisle of the church is finely proportioned with a high vaulted roof, the other divided into little chapels now used as tool-houses: but only the mere shell remains of what must have been a noble and richly decorated building, and one turned away sad at heart at such desolation.

The old castle clock, which has never failed for centuries, struck four. And a steep flight of steps from the delicious little cloister led us up into a tiny court on which opened the doors of comfortable little dwellings contrived in the ancient buildings round the "Sacristan's well"; and as I looked over its margin its whole depth, some thirty feet or more, was lined with a close green cloud of luxuriant Maiden-hair fern.

This was the last "sight" to be seen in this strange domain; and as I wanted to visit the Fort, I proposed to hasten back to my carriage.

"But you are all close to the Fort," cried the custodian, opening a door at the top of the steps into an empty cottage; "and here, by good chance is the son of the Concierge." He pointed to a pleasant-looking, powerful young man who stood leaning his back against the fireplace, with a heavy sack resting on his bent shoulders and the mantelpiece, while a handsome young woman of about twenty-two stood by two smaller sacks on the floor, her bright brown eyes, brilliant colouring, and masses of black hair under a pink handkerchief, together with a pink cotton jacket and blue apron, making a pleasant picture. "He will show you the way, and I will tell your



FONTAINE DE ST. JEAN. VILLENEUVE-LES-AVIGNON

cocher to meet you," said the good gardien, as we bade each other a friendly farewell. And when he opened a further locked door, I found myself really *extra muros* ; for we stepped straight out of the cottage door in the Chartreuse on to the bare, rough rocky hillside below the great fort a quarter of a mile above.

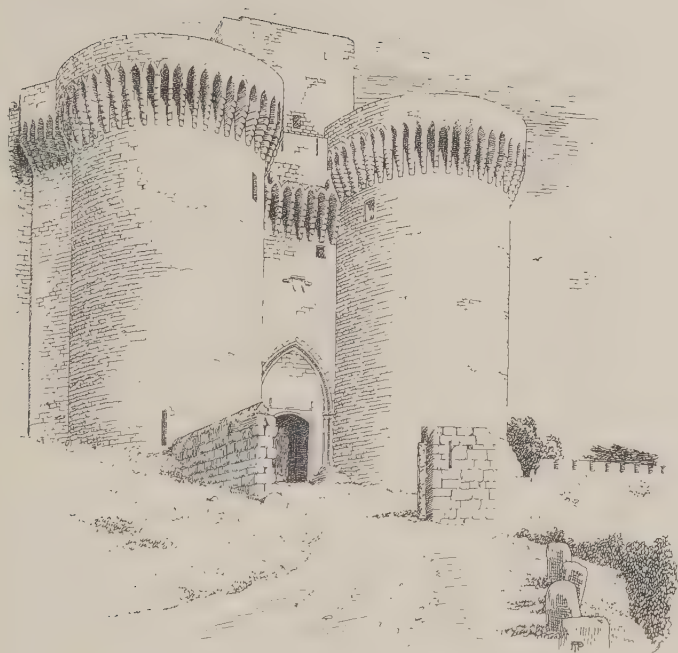
Panting I followed my stalwart and silent guide who strode ahead, while his pretty wife and I toiled behind up the so-called path, a mere steep track over sheets of sun-baked limestone rock and sparse tufts of sun-dried grass. How the sun beat down through hat and parasol, as if it would fain strike one's very brain ! Half-way up even my guides gave out, the man flinging himself and his heavy sack down on a convenient ledge of rock with an "Ouf" of relief, almost the first word he had uttered. His wife and I were glad enough to rest as well. Then, noticing the little red and yellow ribbon on his jacket, I said, "Monsieur est militaire, n'est ce pas ?" and instantly the floodgates of speech were opened.

"Yes, indeed. He had served his full time. In what regiment? *Chasseurs à cheval*, in the Jura—a fine regiment that ; and a fine country ; but he was glad to get back to his *pays*."

Then we fell to talking of English soldiers.

And when he heard that I had lived all my life within nine miles of Aldershot, and had a Maréchal among my near relations, his enthusiasm knew no bounds. "Un maréchal! pas possible! Alors Madame connaît bien les militaires!" And we were fast friends in a moment.

But I was intensely curious to know what was inside those heavy sacks; it could not be corn, for when they were set down they gave out a queer dry rattle. So when we had somewhat exhausted the European military question—for my friend was an intelligent man, and discussed the uses and value of the Entente Cordiale with excellent sense—I asked what the heavy loads might be. "Almonds, that we are bringing up from our farm and our *vigne là-bas*," was the answer, pointing to the cultivated land in the valley at the back of the Chartreuse. A sparse plantation of wind-driven olives and almonds rose above our rocky seat, and seeing that the poor stony ground below them was roughly ploughed, I enquired whether on such mere soil-covered rock it was possible to grow anything under the olives. "No, indeed! it was too poor, too dry. Nothing but olives could live on it, and the ploughing was merely for the sake of the olives."



ENTRANCE OF FORT ST. ANDRÉ. VILLENEUVE-LES-AVIGNON



FORT ST. ANDRÉ. VILLENEUVE-LES-AVIGNON



ON THE MONT ST. ANDRÉ. VILLENEUVE-LES-AVIGNON

Then starting on again, talking thus cheerily, we neared the stupendous entrance to the Fort St. André ; and in the shadow of the gateway, the old Concierge, my guide's father, appeared in peaked cap and official uniform.

How heartily did I wish in the next half-hour that the intelligent soldier son had been cicerone instead of the intolerably tedious old father, who herded an obedient party of French and American tourists as a flock of so many sheep, and was slightly exasperated at my wayward desire to look at that which interested me instead of that which came next in his regular round. If I dared to ask a question out of the proper sequence of events, I was severely bidden "Wait—, wait—, I shall explain that presently."

But the great Fort was so full of interest that one found plenty of food for thought without listening to the old bore's wearisome expositions. Viollet-le-Duc has chosen its great gateway, which was, and is, the sole entrance to the Fort, as one of the finest examples of fortification in that period. The enormous round towers crowned with machicolations, each contain a great guard-room on the lower floor with vaulted roof and fine hooded fireplace. We entered that on the right of the gate, and from thence a narrow spiral

staircase in the wall leads to the upper room known as the *Salle des Chevaliers*, as well as to other small rooms, cells, &c., in the epaulements which join the towers to the massive walls of the enceinte. The whole building, which contains no woodwork of any description, is built of the excellent stone of Villeneuve ; and so admirable is its construction that it remains absolutely intact after seven centuries ; for it was erected by Philippe le Bel in the last years of the 12th century. From the *salle des chevaliers*, whose floor is covered with quaint designs cut in the stone by political prisoners in the 18th century, we entered the square *chambre des herses* over the gateway itself from which the two portcullises were worked, the apparatus remaining nearly perfect. I then found to my dismay that the somewhat perilous ascent of the odious little turret staircase was by no means over ; for we returned to pursue it still further. I hate winding stone staircases with badly worn steps, especially when there is nothing to cling to and the ascent has to be made in almost total darkness, and expressed my views strongly to a pleasant French lady and her two daughters. Whereupon one of the maidens possessed herself of my parasol, guide book and flowers from the Chartreuse,

while I clung to note-book and fan, for the heat was stifling; and groaning and grumbling, as there was no escape—that terrible concierge having locked all the doors behind him—we stumbled onwards and upwards in the darkness and dust under his stern command: but to an unlooked-for reward, so great that all else was forgotten. For when at length we emerged upon the platform on the top of the towers, such a view unfolded itself below us as I have seldom seen.

At our feet flowed the Rhône, its winding course visible for miles north and south through its broad fertile plain, joined above by the Sorgues and the Ouvèze, while we could trace the wide shingly bed of the impetuous Durance joining it a few miles below as it rushes down from the great Alpine watershed, Mont Genève beyond Briançon, that divides it from its Italian sister the Dora Riparia, which joins the Po and flows into the Adriatic saying in the old song:

“ Adieu ma sœur la Durance,
 Nous nous séparons sur ce Mont ;
 Tu va ravager la Provence,
 Moi féconder le Piedmont.”

One town or townlet after another emerges from the green of the vast rich plain. Southwards there is St. Rémy and its Roman arch,

and the towers of Chateau-renard ; Orgon backed by the fantastic peaks of the far-away Alpines that shelter Les Baux ; and Noves the home of Laura. Eastward, hidden in its rugged valley, lies Petrarch's Vaucluse and its fountain ; and further north, Carpentras at the foot of the stately Mt Ventoux that bounds the plain. While as we turn to the west, among the outlying, vine-clothed spurs of the Cevennes that begin just behind Villeneuve, is a reminder, should we need one, of the Papal sovereignty of Avignon—the famous vineyard of Chateauneuf du Pape only a mile or two away.

But it is close at hand that the most enchanting point in this great panorama lies—the view of Avignon itself, where, as Aubanel sang :

“ Palais et tourelles
Font des dentelles
Dans les étoiles.”

To-day the late afternoon sun had turned its palaces and tourelles to a soft pale gold, against rich plain and distant mountain that melted into the tender sky. And one seemed to realize for the first time the full beauty, the stately force of that magnificent creation of the Popes on its tree-crowned rock girt by the great river Rhône.

Happily the concierge was busy locking doors



The Gateway & Walls.
Fort St. André.

and opening others ; so that I could gaze in peace over the high parapet above the machicolations of the towers, examine the curious square *châtelet* in the centre of the platform and the two stone chimneys, and look down at the interior of the great fort mapped out below, with its rough pasture, its little old Romanesque church and ancient convent and collection of houses, round which it was built as an impregnable citadel on the hill-top. Then, to our relief, we came down by the other tower, a rope attached to the wall giving some security against the falls which seemed inevitable on the further stairway.

The soldier and his wife and mother were busy piling up a long cart with almond sacks outside the great gateway. Leaving a small offering for their nice babies I bade them a friendly farewell, with many wishes on both sides that we might meet again some day at the Fort St. André. And then made my way down to the sunny square in the town where my cocher waited, by a steep rocky roadway past strange houses built into the rock, at whose doors women and girls sat threading beads of pale delicate colours, and every child had a bunch of grapes in its hand.

CHAPTER XIV

TARASCON AND BEAUCAIRE

Sept. 18.

AWAY to the south with the gay mistral, that bends the cypress spires and dances through the olives, and almonds, and mulberries. We cross a long viaduct that carries the railway over the immensely wide bed of Durance the impetuous and get a last view of Avignon, while the ragged line of the Alpines rises far southwards over the great plain. Then the Rhône is shut out from view on the right by a ridge of arid, sun-scorched rocks, and as we hurry along with the noble wind we catch a glimpse of Barbentane and Monseigneur de Grimoard's tower high-perched among them, of which Mistral in the Provençal ballad tells, how

“L'évêque d'Avignon, Monseigneur de Grimoard, a construit une tour à Barbentane qui enraye vent de mer et aquilon et brave la puissance du malin. Solidement assise sur le

roc, forte et carrée, exorcisée, elle porte au soleil son front sauvage : à ses fenêtres même, pour le cas où le diable voudrait s'introduire par ses vitres, Monseigneur de Grimoard a fait graver sa mitre. . . ."

We race past Graveson, and try vainly to make out Maillane, only a couple of miles away south-east—the home of Mistral himself. Then in a few minutes more, we are on the lofty embankment that carries the railway and its station high above the city of the immortal Tartarin.

For here is Tarascon. Along this viaduct the camel followed the train that bore its master back from Marseilles on his return from Algiers, his only trophy of the *chasse aux lions* the skin of the blind mangy lion. And here, more perhaps (though I say it with shame) for the sake of that truly great hero than for that of good King René of Provence, or of the cathedral of St. Martha, or even of the famous and terrible Tarasque, I proposed to spend a few hot hours of the hot September day. Even the station stairs are famous. For "ce qui mit le comble à la joie populaire, ce fut quand on vit un animal fantastique, couvert de poussière et de sueur, apparaître derrière le héros,

et descendre à cloche-pied l'escalier de la gare. Tarascon crut un instant sa Tarasque revenue. Tartarin rassura ses compatriotes, c'est mon chameau, dit-il."

A singularly happy-go-lucky spot did Tarascon appear, when we had deposited the luggage and made our way down endless stairs to the road below the station. The one available carriage had been snapped up in a moment; and we were told in almost incomprehensible French that another might possibly be coming along presently, and meanwhile would we not refresh ourselves while we waited—for it might be long—at one of the little tree-embowered cafés across the way. Politely refusing the tempting invitation, we waited patiently till an excellent little carriage did appear, the cheerful young driver speaking quite good French, though with the rich guttural accent of the south, and rollings of the letter "r" like salvos of artillery. So away we drove up the spacious Cours National in merry mood; for who could feel solemn for long together amid mirthful memories of Bompard and Bezuquet and Costecalde the armourer, of the Maison du Baobab, the Chasseurs de Casquette, le Club Alpin, and "le Rapide, vieux coquin de lièvre échappé

comme par miracle aux Septembrisades Tarasconnaises."

But when we came upon the Cathedral in its quiet lonely square, far other associations took the place of these, and for awhile blotted out modern Tarascon from my mind. For here we first touch one of the strange and beautiful legends of St. Martha and the holy Marys in Provence.

According to this legend—one of extreme antiquity—St. Martha with her sister Mary Magdalene, Lazarus, Mary Salome, and Mary the mother of James, with their servants Marcella and black Sara, landed at the Saintes Maries after the Ascension of Our Lord when driven out of Judea by persecution, and introduced Christianity into Provence. Now the whole of this land was a prey to a fierce dragon who lived on the banks of the Rhône, devouring not only wild animals and cattle, but men, women, and children. "It was as large as a bull, having the head of a lion, the mane of a mare, teeth like swords, its back sharp as a scythe, its tail the colour of a viper; it walked on six feet of human form, was covered with a shell like that of a tortoise, and was so hideous that it was commonly

called *Tarasque*, which signifies frightful or deformed."

When St. Martha and her servant Marcella arrived from Arles at Tarascon to preach Christianity to the people, she was moved by their prayers for deliverance from this terrible creature. So she went forth to *nerloc*, the black wood, in which the monster had its lair, and sprinkled it with holy water. The first drop threw it into fearful convulsions; at the second it fell to the earth; at the third St. Martha bound it with her girdle and delivered it to the people who put it to death. Thus did the holy Saint free the land from this scourge.

Whatever the origin of this legend may be, the popular belief has always been, and still is, that St. Martha died at Tarascon and was buried in a grotto turned later into a chapel, which was visited as a holy place by Clovis, and by Louis XI., and now is enclosed in the crypt at the Cathedral. The fine Romanesque entrance doorway on the south side is all that remains of the 12th century Church, and is a singularly good specimen of the round-headed doorway of that period flanked by marble pilasters with sculptured capitals, and a richly decorated archivolt in which Mérimée pointed out that



DOORWAY OF CATHEDRAL. TARASCON

one design, resembling a round ivy-leaf, he saw here for the first time in a 12th century building. Over the doorway is a charming little arcade of alternate round and square pilasters with classic capitals, the cornice on which they rest supported by two round columns.

The interior of the Cathedral, its roof and tower, were rebuilt in the 14th century. The crypt, with Martha's tomb surmounted by a restored recumbent statue of the saint is also of this date, and besides part of the old Gothic tomb contains a very ancient altar and the tomb of Jean Coxa, 1470, seneschal of Provence under le bon roi René. In a side chapel near the high Altar I found some curious and interesting pictures, notably a tryptich of 1413: but otherwise there is little of interest.

Pursuing our way, our cocher drove us up an arcaded street, the grey shutters of every house half-closed to keep out the blinding sun, and past the Hôtel de Ville with its three bells hanging under a little open ironwork belfry after the fashion of Provence, its statue of a somewhat lively Justice in a niche—even Justice is lively here,—and its handsome stone balcony over the door, in which the Municipal Council must find ample space for the vehement gesticulations that

emphasise every word down south. For, until one gets accustomed to the ways of this excitable southern race, one often imagines that two portly and respectable gentlemen who may meet casually in the street are about to fly at each other's throats, so violent is the action of upraised arms and clenched fists, so loudly do the voices shout, while they are merely remarking that the *courses de Taureaux* were fine on last Sunday, that the vintage promises well, or that an Aviator has made a record flight.

Having expressed a wish to be taken to some shop where photographs could be obtained, we turned into a back street behind the Hôtel de Ville and halted at the closed doors of what was apparently a coach house. Not a little puzzled, I saw our cocher spring down and with an air of mystery call a woman from the next house. The mystery deepened. What strange ways are the ways of Tarascon. Do photographs grow here in coach houses? We were invited to descend, and humbly obeyed. A huge key was produced—the doors flew open, and I confess we both gave a little cry, followed by inextinguishable laughter. For we were face to face with La Tarasque herself! There sat the scaly monster in all its horror, its viper-coloured carapace



FÊTE DE LA TARASQUE. TARASCON

bristling with sharp spikes and girt around with St. Martha's white and green girdle, its horrific head imperfectly covered with curly black horse-hair, and when (Oh! bathos!) a string was pulled, its hideous mouth opened and revealed a fiery tongue, while one could well imagine that its long wooden tail, if skilfully manipulated by one of the three bearers within its body who supply the "six feet of human form," might become dangerous to the crowds around it. I laid my hand on the monster's head, remarking to the cocher who was enchanted with the complete success of his surprise,

"Elle devient un peu chauve."

"Ah!" came the answer quick as lightning, with a deprecatory smile, "mais elle est *tellement* vieille!"

On the feast of St. Martha, July 29, the *Fête de la Tarasque* is held at Tarascon in honour of its deliverance from the ravages of the monster. The Tarasque emerges from her "remise," and borne by three men concealed within her hideous body is led round the city by a little girl who personates St. Martha, the centre of a great procession, amid cries and shouts of "la gadou! la tarascou!" from huge crowds, while *orpheons* and *tambourinaires* add their music to the general

tumult. The fête, which was instituted by the good King René who presided at it in 1469, has been shorn in these degenerate days of many curious details, which were undoubted survivals from festivals of the Roman occupation. But any one who dares to brave the July sun of Provence, would find his curiosity well repaid in so typical an example of an ancient southern festivity.

Through more streets with low wide arcades we now made our way to the Château du roi René, a fine example of Provençal architecture, built upon a low rock on the bank of the Rhône. It was begun in 1400 by Louis XI., comte de Provence, and completed by King René his son. When weary of war, so unsuited to his gentle nature, and deprived of his ephemeral kingdom of Sicily, the artist king spent the rest of his days in his own country of Provence, devoting himself to the welfare of his people who loved him, and to literature and art. And here and at Aix his capital, were held those famous Courts of Love and tournaments, with which his name is always associated. The Castle is an admirable piece of workmanship, the machicolations round its walls and many towers being of singularly perfect construction and quoted as one of the best



CHÂTEAU DU ROI RENÉ, TARASCON

examples of the period by Viollet-le-Duc. But the interior with its lofty rooms and galleries in which the good king held his Cours d'Amour, painted his pictures, and wrote his poems and his well-known work on tournaments, cannot be investigated by the curious and leisurely traveller without special permission, as the Château is now used as a prison; therefore we did not see it. He must have been a kindly and delightful personage, judging by his portrait with Jeanne de Laval his second wife, now in the Louvre, which was the work of Nicholas Froment d'Avignon, and a gift from King René to Jean de Matheron.

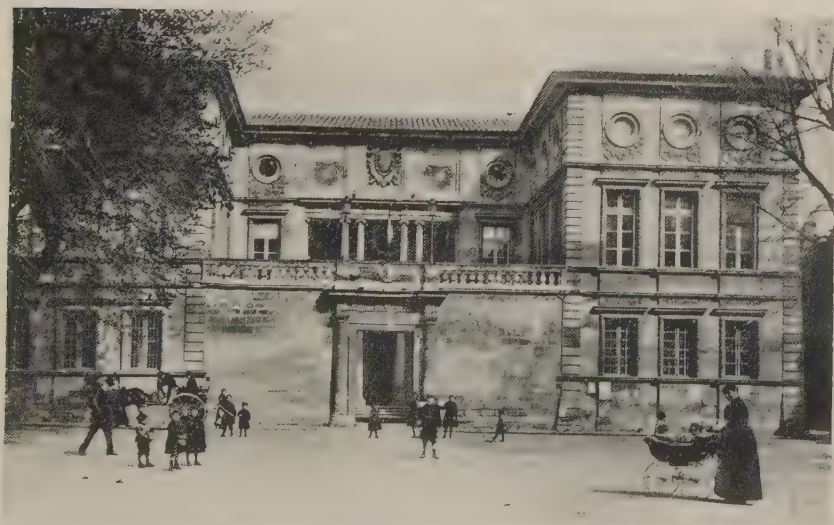
Across the Rhône, which was sweeping down in a somewhat ruffled temper driven by the mistral, we perceived the remains of another castle of quite other character than that of the comfortable, kindly king. For the lofty triangular tower and partly ruined walls of the Château de Beaucaire, built by the Counts of Toulouse, and wrested by young Raymond de Toulouse from the usurper Simon de Montfort and his sons in 1216 after the memorable siege, stood on the summit of a precipitous and frowning cliff. It dominates the town of Beaucaire clustering at the base of the southern slope, and the famous Fair ground all planted with trees

that lies between its perpendicular eastern face and the river.

We had plenty of time before us, therefore to Beaucaire we would go. So we drove across the fine suspension bridge which spans the wide river, and passing the statue of Notre Dame des Voyageurs that guards the western end of the bridge—little dreaming what our next view of that spot would be—found ourselves in a busy port, the mouth of the canal joining the great Canal du Midi which connects the Rhône and the Garonne, the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. Barges filled with merchandise, wine barrels, grain, wood and what not, lay crowded together in endless docks, and gave one a fresh example of the enormous traffic by water-ways in France. But the wide cours alongside the canal was so blinding with white dust and relentless sun, that we implored to be taken to shade of any kind, and were glad to turn into the curious narrow streets of ancient houses. On our way to the nearest tobacconist's, in search of that joy of modern travel the picture post-card which is always to be found there along with postage stamps, I cried halt opposite a charming building in the square. It proved to be the Hôtel de Ville, a delightful bit of Renaissance work built



THE CASTLE. BEAUCAIRE



LA MAIRIE. BEAUCAIRE

upon the plan of a Roman Villa. A wall, level with the first floor, joins the two wings and encloses a pillared forecourt entered by a square doorway flanked by Doric columns; from this court a double staircase leads to an open gallery, and the wall above its Ionic pillars is decorated with sculptured suns surrounded by rays hanging from ribbon scrolls, and *œils de bœuf* with rich garlands below them which are continued round the wings. All the windows are framed in thick sculptured wreaths of olive and oak; and olive branches appear again above them. It was an interesting little discovery; neither guide books or any works on architecture, though I have searched them closely, make mention of this building; and I thought myself fortunate to find a post-card of it at the tobacconist-barber's stuffy little corner shop. For its whole design and the beauty and taste of its decoration make it a highly attractive object.

The ancient houses in most of the narrow streets are built like those in the *rue des Arcades* at Tarascon on wide round-arched arcades, and round archways and passages broad enough to drive through lead from street to street under the houses, forming a sort of cyclopean rabbit-warren, dirty and stifling, from which we were

well pleased to escape to the Fair Ground outside the walls. Here, under the shady trees with the Rhône on one side and the frowning cliff of the castle on the other, we tried to imagine what the famous foire de Beaucaire must have been in the days of its glory, which railways and steamships have sadly diminished—the foire de Beaucaire of which Alphonse Daudet says, “Dans nos provinces meridionales elle était la férie de l’année . . . c’était encore, sous prétexte de commerce, quinze jours, un mois de la vie libre, exubérante, imprévue, d’un campement bohémien. On couchait ça et là chez l’habitant, dans les magasins sur les comptoirs, en pleine rue sous la toile tendue des charrettes, à la chaude lumière des étoiles de juillet. Oh ! les affaires sans l’ennuyeux de la boutique, les affaires traitées en dinant sur la porte, en bras de chemise, les baraques en file le long du pré, au bord du Rhône qui lui-même n’était qu’un mouvant champ de foire, balançant ses bateaux de toutes formes, ses *lahuts* aux voiles latines, venus d’Arles, de Marseille, de Barcelone, des Îles Baléares, chargés de vins, d’anchois, de liège, d’oranges, parés d’oriflammes, de banderoles qui claquaient au vent frais, se reflétaient dans l’eau rapide ! Et ces clameurs, cette foule bariolée d’Espagnols, de Sardes, de Grecs en longues

tuniques et babouches brodées, d'Armeniens en bonnets fourrés, de Turcs avec leurs vestes galonnées, leurs éventails, leurs larges pantalons de toile grise, se pressant aux restaurants en plein vent, aux étalages de jouets d'enfants, de cannes, ombrelles, argenterie, pastilles du sérail, casquettes."¹

The mistral gave us a little taste of its strength as we recrossed the big bridge to Tarascon, lashing the Rhône into waves, and doing its best to carry away hats, parasols or any insecure property. But after the stuffy streets of Beaucaire even its violence was not unwelcome, though we less appreciated the clouds of dust it raised in which we made our way down the broad Cours, wondering which was the Maison du Baobab. And we were not sorry to find we had ample time for a frugal and refreshing *gouter* of petits pains, butter, matchless grapes and pears, with white wine, all for 1s. 4d., at the station, before our train came in for Arles.

¹ *Numa Roumestan.*

CHAPTER XV

ARLES

HÔTEL DU FORUM, *Sept.* 19.

“Lou souleu me fai canta.”

DEAR ——. The sun does not make me “sing,” like the cigale depicted on this note-paper: but really with a light mistral blowing it is very enchanting and sends one’s spirits up nearly to singing point. We ran down from Tarascon yesterday by the famous viaduct along which Tartarin saw his camel trotting in pursuit of the train—squeezed into a compartment with a Tartarin family on their way to Marseilles. They were all in deep mourning—father, mother, and two girls; the ladies divested themselves of their hats and bonnets and laid them on the rack carefully covered with newspaper. Then the father—so portly that S. was nearly squeezed flat next him—opened a bag and from among articles of clothing produced food wrapped in newspaper—



Arles from the Amphitheatre.

sausages off which he cut large chunks with a pocket-knife, and long rolls. The family then ate these delicacies with their fingers and after drinking their *vin du pays* from a common tumbler (very little of it, for these southerners drink very little), wiped them with their pocket-handkerchiefs. And this in a first class carriage! It was a pretty sight—and the heat being intense made it all the more enjoyable to us, while the floor was strewn with greasy debris. We were therefore glad when we arrived at the station of Arles. No wonder that la tante Portal waited for Numa's arrival in the stationmaster's room; for there is no waiting room, and the whole thing is hardly on a level with some wayside station on an English railroad.

We squeezed into a tiny omnibus and were assured our luggage would follow presently by another, a statement which we doubted. A cross old lady and a feeble old gentleman insisted on having all the windows save one closed tight for fear of a *courant d'air*, while we stifled, and off we went clinging to our handbags from which we positively refused to be parted.

Crossing the Cours where la tante Portal lived, we penetrated the city through the Porte de la Cavalerie in the great ramparts, walls that are

partly and in some places wholly of Roman building, and were in a moment engaged in such an intricate *dédale* of narrow streets that I knew not in what direction we were going. Confusion was worse confounded when a sudden turn into one of the narrowest brought us up short ; for it was already fully occupied by a cart of wood coming towards us, and there was nothing for it but to back us out solemnly and then go round another way. So that by the time we turned into the Place des Hommes—worthy of its name, for crowds of men stood on the paved square in the centre under the plane-trees, all talking at the top of their voices in Provençal round Mistral's statue—I was hopelessly *désorientée* and have remained so ever since.

Then my troubles began. For although this is the best hotel, very bad is such a best. I had ordered good rooms some days ago. What was my disgust when I was shown into two small holes, dark, dirty, inconceivably stifling and almost bare of furniture, looking out on a narrow passage. I promptly demanded others, and investigated one horrible airless den after another full of ancient stuffy smells till I was in despair. At last the civil and very worried *valet de chambre* who

showed me these impossible rooms, said that if I did not mind going up *au troisième* he had some *belles chambres* there. So up the slippery wooden stairs I toiled, and there found two nice little front rooms overlooking the Place des Hommes. The floors were red-painted tile quarries, and being guiltless of even a rug one thought they could not conceal many dangers, and there was some good old furniture and an iron bedstead in mine. So, slightly placated and much out of breath, I decided to stay. We then found there was no key to the drawers; and when one was brought, the said drawers were so filthy I had them taken out and cleaned in the passage by the worried *valet de chambre* and his hard-worked tired little wife. But after an abominable dinner quite cold, abominably cooked, and worse served, I lost my temper very extensively—threatening to leave the hotel, and being an *écrivain* to say evil things of it in print. It was rather a mean weapon to use: but I was really starving—having only been able to eat a bit of bread and some grapes! And it was entertaining to see the effect the threat produced. For great is the power of the pen to the French mind. To-day the result has been astonishing. The worried

valet de chambre has constituted himself my special waiter—and he calls attention to every dish he brings me, for it is so piping hot it burns his fingers—while I am quickly and carefully served, and the envy of all the other wretched guests, who in vain demand food.

From my airy sky-parlour I get a curiously interesting view over house-roofs, strange towers, old buildings, and walls; the great bells of the Tour de l'Horloge surmounted by its statue of Mars, or *l'homme de bronze* as they call it here, ring out every quarter in full deep notes, while the mistral flutters the leaves of the plane-trees in the Place des Hommes below, and the loud voices of the crowd of men who gather there at all times of day remind one that this was the ancient Forum, and is still used as such. So despite discomforts I shall stay for a few days as the place is full of wonders; and with this gay mistral blowing I don't mind the heat—and there are not many mosquitoes.

This morning I went to High Mass at St. Trophime, and entered by its wondrous portal among the fair—or rather *dark*—Arlesiennes, in their quaint and attractive costume. I had imagined that their vaunted good looks must be exaggerated. But I certainly saw many very beautiful

women. The girls, however, are giving up costume, and do not look half as fine as their elders. But I will tell you more about them when I have had a chance to see more of them.

—Yours ever,

R. G. K.

CHAPTER XVI

LES ALISCAMPS AND THE AMPHITHEATRE

ARLES, *Sept.* 19.

“ Presso ad Arli, ov’l Rodano Stagna
Piena di sepolture é la campagna.”

—ARIOSTO.

It has been a strange Sunday afternoon full to overflowing of interest. With a light mistral blowing, blazing sun, intense blue sky, and fierce clear heat, we set forth to get a general notion of the ancient city, driving first to St. Trophime, where we wondered afresh at its marvellous portal, the handsome doors now closed which had been wide open as we all poured forth from High Mass this morning. Thence, by a steep narrow street of handsome old houses on the north of the Cathedral, we drove up to the Roman Theatre which stands directly beyond its east end, and here got a good view of the fine three-storied Romanesque tower of St. Trophime, which is difficult to see from other points of view.

Though completely ruined, enough remains of the theatre to give some faint idea of what its



THE ROMAN WALLS. ARLES



LES ALISCAMPS. ARLES



Roman Theatre, Arles.

magnificence must have been in the 1st century. Its chief treasure, the well-known *Venus of Arles*, now in the Louvre, was found here in 1651 on the actual site of the stage, and presented by M. de Grille, first consul of Arles, to Louis XIV. in 1683. Other statues and numbers of fine marble sculptures have been discovered from time to time, some of which are now in the Arles Museum. But the pavement of the orchestra in marble slabs of various colours, and the seats of the auditorium, are still in their place. Two beautiful Corinthian columns, one of Carrara, the other of African marble, with a bit of their entablature, stand on the wall of the proscenium which is adorned further on by the bases of others. Parts also of the outer wall are intact, round-arched openings of the portico, and a doorway with beautifully sculptured frieze and architrave; while fragments of columns, and huge blocks of stone and marble, now carefully preserved and arranged, enable one to trace out the complete plan of the theatre. But after the glorious theatre of Orange, this was too desolate a spectacle to arouse one's enthusiasm as that had done. And besides it was too hot, and there were too many huge black ants in the so-called grass, that is all made up of the little yellow stock

and grey-mauve sage which grows everywhere among Roman ruins, to tempt us to linger. So we hastened on to the far greater interest close by of the Arènes.

A short turn along a narrow street, and the amazing building was suddenly close before us, astounding in size, extent, and completeness. The black caverns of the vomitories of the lower storey, the dazzling blue sky through the arcades of the upper storey, the Doric columns between the sixty lower arches, the Corinthian between those above resting on a massive cornice, all constructed of huge blocks of that softly golden stone fitted cunningly together without one touch of mortar—the effect of all this to one who had never before seen a Roman Amphitheatre was simply overpowering.

It stands on the crest of the little rocky hill upon which Arles is built: and we came close upon it from the back with only the width of the roadway between us and its stupendous walls. It was not therefore till we had driven down the steep slope to the main entrance and halted at the bottom of the immense spreading flight of steps below it, that we could at all realize its full size and magnificence. For although the 1200 houses that grew up within its area and against

its outer walls were removed in 1826 and the next six years, the labyrinthine streets and lanes of the city are clustered so closely around it that it is only from this one point that any general view is to be obtained.

I had carefully planned my visit to Arles in order to avoid Sunday, Sept. 26th, when there was to be a much-advertised Spanish bull-fight in the Amphitheatre. But to-day, rather to my dismay there was unexpected animation about the entrance. There were gatekeepers and ticket vendors.

"Té!" as one feels obliged to say here in Provence, "qu'est-ce qui arrive, cocher?"

"Les courses de Taureaux," is the answer.

"Not the Spanish bull-fighters?"

"Ah! no—that is for the 26th."

"But, see then—on ne tue pas aujourd'hui?"

"Mais non! mais non! c'est seulement la jeunesse qui s'amuse."

"Then we will return at three and enter for sure! And now to Les Aliscamps."

A contrast indeed was here. Below the handsome, tree-shaded boulevards outside the great Roman walls, men were playing bowls or quoits on a sunk and shady ground; Arlésiennes, some of great beauty, were out in their Sunday best, the

coloured skirt and fichu to match over the plain black silk or stuff bodice with long sleeves tight to the wrist, the full white muslin or lace neckerchief open at the throat, and the charmingly becoming black ribbon head-dress over the dark hair waved and drawn down full over the ears, and dressed in a knob on the top of the head which is covered by a tiny white lace cap round which the ribbon is placed.

Then came a long avenue ; and on each side of the very bad carriage-way stood tombs—endless tombs—Roman and Christian, backed by a row of trees, cypress, pine, plane, elm, and others to me unknown.¹

This is all that remains of Les Aliscamps—*Elisii Campi*—Champs Elysées—the ancient cemetery of Roman Arles, a spot of such sanctity and renown that the dead, Christian as well as pagan, were brought to it from distant cities along the course of the Rhône, even from far away Lyons itself. So great was its fame, so strange the legends that in early Christian times attached to it, that Dante compares the scene in the *Inferno*, ix. 112, to it—

*“ Si come ad Arli ov’èl Rodano stagna,
Fanno i sepolcri tutto’l loco varo.”*

¹ These were the *Falabréguié*, *Celtis australis*. See “Mont-majour,”



Chapelle de St. Césaire, Aliscamps.

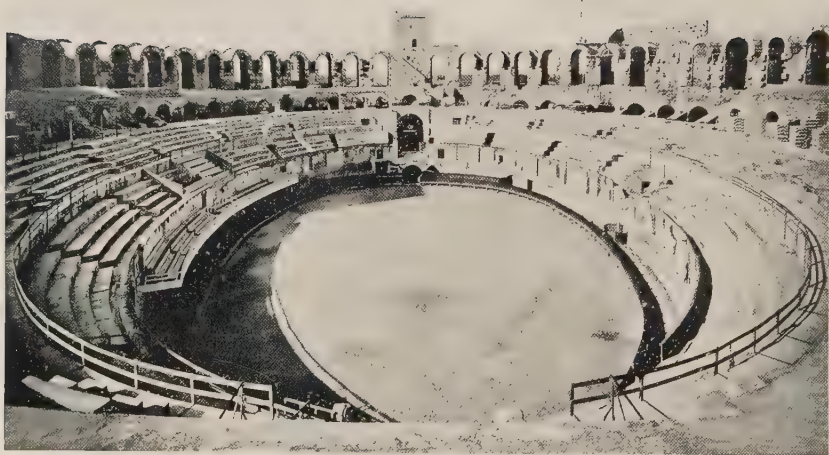
And Ariosto mentions it almost in the same words in *Orlando Furioso*.

It was of vast extent. And when St. Trophime, who was first Bishop of Arles, devoted a special part of it for Christian burial, its fame increased greatly from a legend that our Saviour himself appeared in a vision at the consecration, and the devout of all classes desired in consequence to be buried in so holy a spot. It was believed that if the dead far up the valley of the Rhône were committed in their coffins to the great river, it would surely convey them to the low marshy flats at Arles "where the Rhône stagnates," whence the bodies were carried by the monks of St. Honorat to their burial in Les Aliscamps. The whole ground was, and I suspect is still in places, full of tombs, sarcophagi, and inscriptions. But in the 16th century when St. Trophime's body was transferred from the Aliscamps to the church of St. Étienne, the fame of the Aliscamps diminished and spoliation began, numbers of the finest Roman and early Christian sarcophagi being offered as precious gifts to kings and princes, or to other cities. Many of the best went to Rome; that of Servius Marcellianus to Lyons; and those of Flavius Memorius and Cœcilia Aprula to Marseilles. The museum

of Arles contains some very remarkable specimens, and the two side altars in St. Trophime also come from this spot; while numbers of others are used for water troughs, or are built into houses of later date.

The Revolution of 1793, and later on the building of the P.L.M. Railway which runs through a portion of the ground, set the final seal of devastation on these Elysian Fields. But since 1847 the remaining tombs which lay scattered and desecrated, have been brought together and arranged on each side of the long promenade which one enters by the great Romanesque arch of the Chapelle de la Tour or St. Césaire. Other smaller chapels and oratories line the way, with monuments, sarcophagi, and inscriptions innumerable. And at the end stands the ancient ruined Romanesque church of St. Honorat, crowned by a singular and handsome octagonal tower of two tiers of round-headed windows, two on each face, while its beautiful round-arched doorway leads into what was the nave and now is the old gardien's violet garden.

We now made our way back under the towering city walls on their precipitous rocky base, to the Arènes. Tickets at the gate are, "Hommes



INTERIOR OF THE AMPHITHEATRE. ARLES



ROMAN AMPHITHEATRE. ARLES

60 cts. Dames et enfants 35 cts." So for once our cheapness and inferiority as women is in our favour. In we go through the barrier armed with the 3½d. tickets, and find ourselves at once in the outer couloir on the ground floor of the stupendous Amphitheatre, greatly puzzled as to what to do next. A courteous man sees our bewilderment and shows us the way up the first flight of huge steps, at the head of which we emerge on the grand tier, set out with innumerable little rough and narrow wooden tables with rougher and narrower little benches on each side of them, standing upon the roughest of surfaces, the ancient Roman stone and brick of the *gradins*, and shaded from the fierce sun by thin awnings of coarse brown canvas on sticks and posts secured by wire guys. And the whole shady side of the vast amphitheatre, from the great arches against the blue sky above down to the sand-strewn arena, was densely crowded with men, women, and children—rose-crowned hats beside black ribbon Arlésien coifs ; men with Panamas turned smartly down in front and up behind or sailor hats ; a couple of cheery sailors perched on a coign of vantage, in round blue berets with their scarlet pompoms, and red-trouserred, blue-coated soldiers by the dozen. While down in

the great arena below the solemn walls and arches, instead of Gladiators fighting to the death or Christian Martyrs being torn to pieces by savage beasts, a lean, wild-eyed, golden-brown cow is making sport for and with some fifty men and lads, who trail their coats and dare her to toss them, and when she tries it in earnest, vault like so many cats over the high defending barrier—the ancient *podium*—surrounding the great ellipse.

Here we sat—we moderns of the 20th century, as Romans must have sat (barring the narrow wooden benches and tables) nigh upon 2000 years ago under the same slight canvas awnings, among the happy good-tempered bourgeois crowd of Arles, who laughed and applauded each fresh feat of man or cow, and chattered vociferously in their fine Provençal tongue with its soft sibilants and rich vowels and strong gutturals; for it was only here and there that one caught a word of pure French. The vendors of lemonade wandered round with the regulation glass and bottle of innocuous liquid by which all are expected to pay for their little bench and table. The peanut sellers were much in request; and ever and anon, with her basket of little cakes heaped up on a clean white cloth, a woman threaded her

way along the gradins with the musical cry of "Li pan ou la! li pan ou la!"¹ The whole scene was so utterly outside all ordinary experience, that I asked myself is this really A.D. 1909, or is it A.D. 109? Am I in Roman Gaul, or in French Provence? At one moment I seem to be living in the first chapter of *Numa Roumestan*—perhaps that may be "le bon Numa" himself in the tribune down below. In the next I feel that Paris gowns, and Panama hats, and soldiers' uniforms are a mere illusion, and that all of us must really, if we only knew it, be dressed in togas and flowing robes and Roman armour.

But now the band blares forth brazen and very un-Roman notes; the great doors at the further end of the arena are thrown open, and out trots a splendid old golden-brown bull of the Camargue with a bell round his neck, his fine head high in the air. He gives a contemptuous glance at the assembly—for he has often been here before—lowers his head threateningly at two or three men who make for safety with remarkable agility, trots all round the edge of the ellipse with an occasional snort at any one who dares to stay in his path, the cow gladly accepting his protecting

¹ Le pain de lait.

presence, and leads her out by the dark gaping opening of the *podium* to her stable.

There was a pause in which voices rose high, lemonade corks popped, and the band added to the general confusion of sound; then the great doors opened again and comparative silence fell on the vast crowd as another cow, older and with a nasty temper, ran out and pawed the sand of the arena. Now the fun began afresh; for here was a real chance for *la jeunesse* of Arles to "deeds of derring do,"—and there was an uncommonly lively ten minutes' work before them. One made for her with his coat which he trailed almost under her nose, and she responded to the insult so promptly that he fled like a hare leaving his coat to her tender mercies. I hope it was an old one, for it was tossed and gored by these sharp horns, then knelt upon and stamped and pawed and tossed afresh till one imagined that coat would never be worth much again. Then one, greatly daring, brought out one of the curious *fourches*, used by the *gardiens de la Camargue* who watch over the magnificent herds of half wild cattle in that great delta between the two branches of the Rhône; and using it as a leaping pole he sprang right over the cow's back. And presently a very fat man in white shirt and full

grey trousers, excited by these hairbreadth 'scapes must needs go down into the arena and prove his courage too. We then began to get a little nervous; for the cow instantly singled him out as fair game, and made straight for him with such fury that every one held their breath, for as he sprang into safety with an agility I could not have believed, her horns resounded on the barrier behind him, and a huge shout of laughter and relief went up to the blue sky with clouds of dust from her mad rush.

And so the afternoon wore on—and after watching the sport for an hour, and wandering round the dark, cool, solemn couloir below the upper arches, we made our way out again, and essayed to walk back—as I thought—to the Place du Forum, for I knew it was close by. But I had not reckoned with the narrow and confusing labyrinth of Arlésien streets. The Place du Forum seemed strangely far away when we had walked for ten weary minutes on agonizing cobble stones. I then discovered on asking that I was of course going in the exactly opposite direction; and it was only by dint of enquiries at every turn that we managed at last to reach our goal.

CHAPTER XVII

ST. TROPHIME

Sept. 20.

I HAD only time yesterday to get a glimpse of the famous Porch of St. Trophime as I passed in and out beneath it with the congregation. So I devoted this morning to the Cathedral and its enchanting Cloister, where to my great pleasure I found Mr. F. D. Thoroton at work on a masterly water-colour.

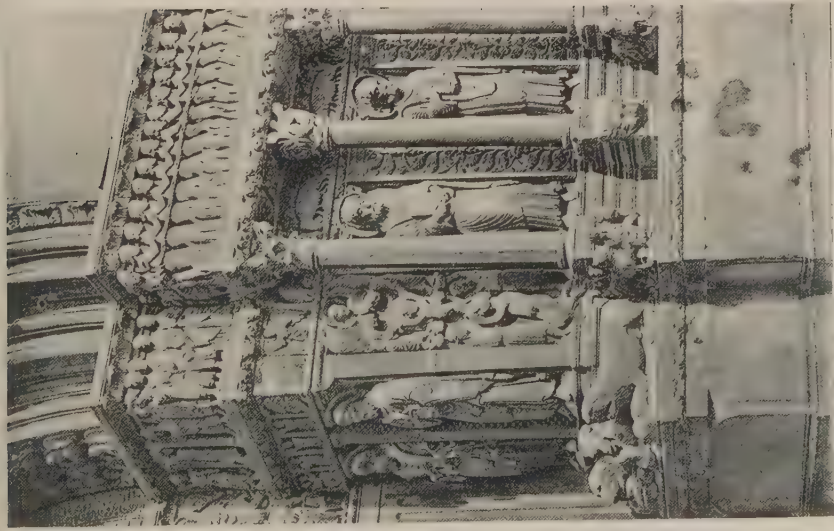
One forgets that the façade of the great basilica is plain to positive ugliness ; for every thought is concentrated on the amazing beauty and interest of its portal—second only to that of St. Gilles—which projects from it, raised above the ground on broad steps and surmounted by a low pediment whose cornice is supported by brackets carved with symbolic figures and foliage. “As to structure, profils and ornamentation,” says Viollet-le-Duc, “this door is thoroughly romano-greek, syriac ; as to statuary, it is gallo-roman with a pronounced byzantine influence.” It consists of

a deeply recessed arch springing from a horizontal frieze which forms the lintel of the door and is continued from beneath the arch right and left round the two projecting sides. And in this frieze, as Professor Charles H. Moore has pointed out to me, we get a real classic order, with architrave, frieze, and cornice. This classic order is found even more perfectly at St. Gilles, where the pillars themselves are classic. This frieze rests upon six pillars on each side of the door, some square, others round or octagonal; a single granite column in the centre of the door on whose capital St. Michael is sculptured leaning on a lance, supports the lintel. Under the arch these pillars stand on lions, the others in front on lions' heads or monstrous figures; and all have richly sculptured capitals, and are raised high above the steps on a lofty stylobate. The recesses between them are occupied by eight full length figures of saints, with St. Trophime in the angle on the left as we enter, and the stoning of St. Stephen on the right. This last is a curious work—the saint kneels in Roman dress, two Romans with uplifted hands hurling stones upon him, while from above an angel apparently lowers the Infant Saviour on to his head; or it may be that the child's figure is intended to represent the

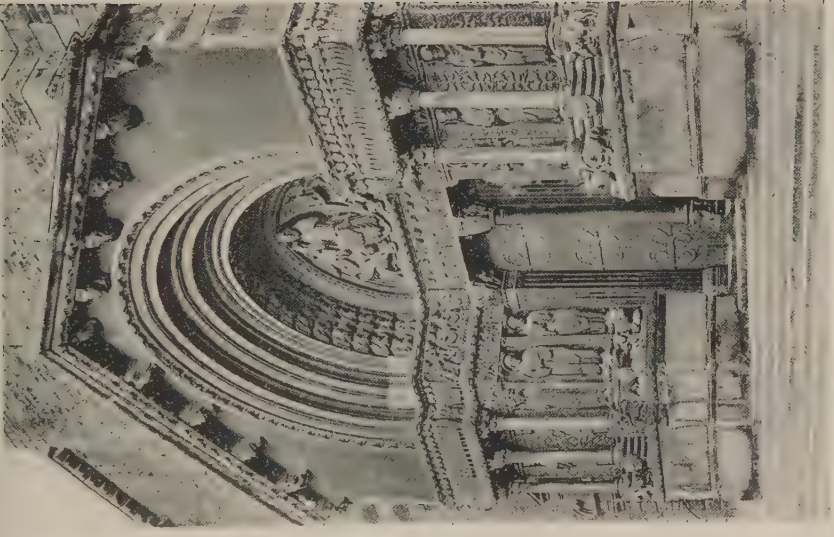
Saint's soul rising to heaven. I have had many discussions about it : but personally I incline to the first interpretation.

In the tympanum Christ crowned in glory sits with uplifted hand surrounded by the symbols of the four evangelists bearing the gospels ; and the first coving of the archivolt is composed of two rows of adoring Cherubims. On the lintel below are the twelve apostles ; and from the left a long procession of the elect, all clothed, the women following the men who are headed by two bishops, advances towards them along the frieze, while on the opposite side the condemned, naked and chained together are driven away by a devil in the midst of flames.

The mere colour of the whole porch is a delight in itself apart from its extreme interest ; the stone has taken on a smooth grey surface so dark in places as to make one fancy it is bronze, or that it has been touched by fire. But this seems due to the oil which was used upon it in early times. And this soft harmonious tone of the richly sculptured doorway makes its contrast with the interior of the great basilica even more striking when one enters—so singularly bare of decoration are its three lofty aisles built of the pale warm golden limestone of the country with which



DETAIL OF PORTAL OF ST. TROPHIME, ARLES



PORTAL OF ST. TROPHIME, ARLES

we have grown so familiar. Yet bare as it is, it is imposing in its complete simplicity.

The original church was built, it is supposed, on the ruins of the Roman Pretorium, and consecrated A.D. 626. But the present building dedicated to St. Trophime, who is believed to have been a disciple of St. Paul, dates from 1152, the choir, which is late Gothic, being added in 1430; and the whole was admirably restored by Revoil some years ago. Two early Christian sarcophagi of the 3rd or 4th century are used as side altars in the aisle and north transept, the latter being a remarkably good specimen in white marble, its decoration representing the passage of the Red Sea; and there are some fine old tapestries placed high up on the walls. Otherwise there is not much of interest in the interior beyond its actual construction.

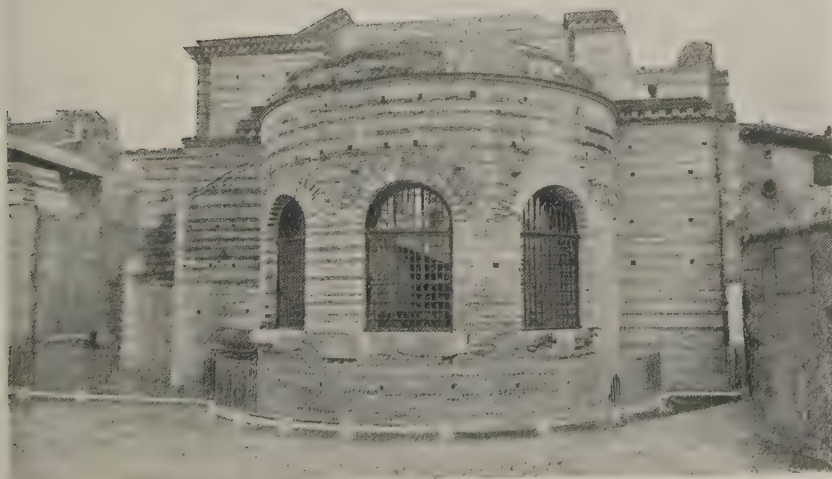
But when we mount the long flight of steps in the south aisle beyond the sacristy and push open the door at their head, we emerge into one of the most captivating spots I know—the Cloister of St. Trophime. Before I had seen it I thought I knew all about it, having read and re-read every description learned and unlearned I could lay hands on, and studied endless plans and drawings until it seemed to me that I had every minutest

detail by heart. But my little knowledge vanished before the reality. None of these had given me the faintest idea of its delicious colour, its entrancing light and shade, as the sun glanced through its arcades and cast blue shadows of its twin pillars on the pavement and lit up the green grass and wild mint in the centre of the square, while one caught a glint of dazzling blue sky through its round-headed arches. Delight and interest in the endless details came later. At first one only desired to look on this gem from the purely artistic standpoint, as an exquisite whole of light and shade and form, and of subtle colour that lurks in the marble polished in places to a rich soft yellow, in the drapery of the figures, in the delicate lines of decoration, and hides in the deep shadow behind the head of a saint only to reveal itself by some fresh movement of shifting cloud or some fresh hour of the day.

It is such a restful place that I lingered long in it, and returned often to feast my eyes anew and slowly absorb its charm. And each time I discovered some new point of view, or some fresh detail in the sculpture of the great piers, or the capitals of the twin pillars, especially those of the north and east Romanesque galleries of the early 12th century, which are to me more attractive than



THE CLOISTERS OF ST. TROPHIME, ARLES



PALACE OF CONSTANTINE, ARLES

the later 13th century south and west ones where the arches are slightly pointed. Every capital is carven with symbolic figures or scenes from sacred history, and even St. Martha and the Tarasque find a place among them. The great corner piers and those supporting the transverse ribs of the barrel roof of the galleries, are decorated with statues of Christ, the apostles and saints; while on their side towards the central court they are strengthened by square fluted pilasters with Corinthian capitals which form veritable buttresses. "Ce cloître," says Viollet-le-Duc, "est d'une grande richesse comme sculpture; les colonnettes, les chapiteaux, le revêtement des piles sont de marbre gris; le long du mur, une riche arcature reçoit le berçeau. On sent dans les sculptures aussi bien que dans les profils du cloître de St. Trophime, l'influence des arts de l'antiquité romaine. Les piliers, décorés de statues, sont composés avec un grand art, et ont fort bon air."

It is interesting to note that the earlier work in the north and east galleries is in far better preservation than in the others, for the reason that the statues have been cut in the actual marble with which the piers are faced, while those of a century later have been sculptured separately

and placed against the piers. At the south-east corner a charming old marble well-head, yellow with age, stands with its iron crane and pulley against the richly decorated pier, a most picturesque note. And the wall at the end of the south gallery is occupied by an altar with a niche and decoration of a later date above it. A very beautiful blind arcade runs along the wall of the north gallery against the church. And above it a cornice supports the barrel roof, with heads of monstrous animals, goats, asses, bears, cats, or grotesques, as brackets for each of the massive ribs crossing it from the piers opposite.



CLOISTER OF ST. TROPHIME, THE WELL. ARLES

CHAPTER XVIII

MONTMAJOUR

Sept. 20.

AFTER an early afternoon cup of tea in my sky-parlour, S. and I drove out to Montmajour, along the straight white road shaded on either side by big elms—all topped—that runs north-eastwards through the wide plain past many a goodly “Mas,” with house and farm buildings round its spacious yard closed in by the great wooden gates, its vine over the house door forming a graceful and shady porch—such a “Mas” as might have been the scene of Daudet’s poignant tragedy of “L’Arlèsienne” which filled my mind as I drove by. Ploughlands newly turned since harvest, and miles of vineyards, stretched away as far as eye could see on every side; till, as we turned off to Pont des Moines, the wooded hill of Montmajour and the arid one of Mont Cordes rose before us—two rocky islands in the flat alluvial plain. Strong pollard willows with very narrow leaves now took the place of elms, their

feet in wet ditches fed by the beneficent waters of the Durance from the irrigating canals which have turned this vast and once useless plain into fertile arable land. The vineyards on both sides of the road were hung thickly with tempting bunches of ripe grapes, and far away among them we could see scores of men and women up to their waists among the vines, which here are grown as bushes, filling their square red-brown baskets with the fruit ; for the vintage is in full swing here, and at every turn one meets long carts piled high with baskets and tubs of purple grapes.

Now we turned round the flank of Montmajour, its rocky sides covered with sparse-foliaged pines, evergreen oaks, *Falabréguié*, and half-wild figs, till at last on the eastern side the great ruined Benedictine Monastery came in view. The 18th century portion looked strangely incongruous—like some huge and modern Parisian hotel smitten by earthquake for its insolence in adding its flat walls and big square-headed windows to so strange and ancient a building as the 11th and 12th century church and monastery. After climbing up through scattered pines to the gardienne's little garden, a delightful old lady in costume led us up to the great 12th century Romanesque Church—vast, and wholly bare, save for a red



RUINS OF MONTMAJOUR

marble altar standing all alone in the utter emptiness under the huge lofty arches. I shivered at the solitude, the silence, the bareness of this strange and pathetic spaciousness—the work of “la bande noir” from Arles during the French Revolution. But there was more to see that was of greater interest than this desolate upper church. For the old lady, lighting a solitary candle led the way down a narrow and totally dark stairway into the black darkness of the 11th century crypt or lower church, semicircular, and for the most part hewn out of the solid rock. The high altar stands in a central apse in whose solid wall are openings corresponding with the side chapels across the ambulatory which runs round it; and through these openings the Elevation of the Host at the high altar could be seen by the priests in each of the side chapels. The chapels on the left are lighted by tiny meurtrières, as the hillside slopes away sharply to the north; while those on the right are totally dark, being hewn out of the solid rock of the hill.

It was quite a relief to escape again from the sad, strange, empty upper Church with its red marble altar standing all alone in its midst, and get out into God's blessed sunlight, as we made our way into the Cloister with a charming cistern in the

centre of its court. The cloister is much like that of St. Trophime, with twin pillars and round-headed arches : but the decoration and whole construction is far less elaborate, though good. The hall of the Chapter which opens upon it is well preserved. But the great dining-hall outside is a sheepfold, and a very dirty one at that. For the once rich and powerful Benedictine Monastery, built on the site of a hermit's cell of the 6th century, is now a little farm.

The view east, south, and west, from the wall beyond the great ruined arch was magnificent, over Mont Cordes, where Numa Roumestan's careless southern words filled poor Hortense Le Quesnoy's head with disastrous enthusiasm for Valmajour, the tambourinaire—and the hill hiding les Baux, and the Alpines, and the Montagne de Luberon, and all the mountains above Aix, till one fancied one could divine the Esterels among the clouds.

Arles with its many towers rose grandly out of the richly cultivated plain south and west, with the flat stretches of La Camargue and its innumerable herds of cattle and half-wild horses beyond the Rhône. And behind us stood the great square tower crowned with machicolations, that was built in 1369 to protect the Monastery



THE CLOISTERS. MONTMAJOUR

on this, its only accessible side. For Montmajour in mediæval times was an island, surrounded by water and marshes except on the south-west where it could be reached from Arles by a causeway—until in later days the Benedictine monks of Montmajour gradually drained the marshes and turned them into fertile land, for which beneficent work their memory is held in much reverence and honour.

I greatly wished, had time allowed it, that I could have visited the curious Montagne de Cordes, not only for the sake of its association with the tragic history of poor Hortense, but for its archæologic interest.

The Montagne de Cordes was once fortified, and remains of ramparts, evidently built in haste, are still to be seen round the base of the hill where it is not defended by its natural rocky escarpments. This was supposed to have been the work of the Saracens, who held Arles for many years and built the square towers on the amphitheatre, and that the name "Cordes" was a reminiscence of Cordova. But the singular subterranean cavern at the summit, cut out of the heart of the rock itself and covered with flat stone slabs, to which access was gained by an inclined way down a sort of crevasse, speaks of far greater antiquity

than the Saracenic occupation. The form of this strange chamber—72 feet long—exactly follows the lines of a Gallic sword; and as the Gauls adored the god Mars in the form of a sword, it is supposed that this subterranean chamber is of Gallic origin. It is known in the country as the *Trau-di-Fado*—the Grotte des Fées; and it is popularly believed that it is part of a subterranean passage communicating with the other *Trau-di-Fado* at Les Baux. This belief Mistral has embodied in Canto vi. of *Mirèio*; in which *Mirèio* bravely goes with her wounded lover *Vincen* to the witch in the Val d'Enfer, and after witnessing all the horrors which accompanied the brewing of the famous potion which healed *Vincen*, the witch shows the lovers a passage—

“À l’extrémité duquel un filet de jour se glisse,—menu,
 “menu. . . Ils partent en hate la joue effarée et courbant
 “la nuque.

“Par souterains, au Trou de Corde—le beau couple aborde
 “enfin;—ils remontent au soleil. . . Recouvrant le rocher—
 “de ses ruines et de sa vieillesse—Mont Majour, l’abbaye des
 “moines,—leur apparait comme en un songe.—Ils s’embras-
 “sent et gagnent la jonchaie.”

“*Mirèio*.” Literal translation by Frédéric Mistral.

Our charming old lady next insisted on taking us through a door in the defending wall where workmen were busy repairing broken portions—

for the ruins of Montmajour are now under the protection of the Beaux Arts department, and are carefully seen to by government. And I found we were expected to follow her down many steep and deep steps, among fig-trees and shrubs clinging to the precipitous hillside which led to St. Trophime's Chapel and cell hewn out of the rock below. Although at first I stoutly resisted, as I was very tired and thought that I had been up and down more than enough steps and stairs and rocky ways for one afternoon, I was glad eventually that her insistence won the day. For the strange little chapel is an exceedingly early Romanesque building; while the cell beyond, with what is called St. Trophime's Confessional adjoining it, is of great antiquity, and might well have served, as the old lady assured us it did, as a refuge for the good saint and other early Christians from persecution. The whole interior is cut out of the solid rock below the monastery, and from the entrance the hillside slopes down sharply to the rich well-cultivated land of the plain.

Our guide was triumphant at our interest in the curious building, and repaid me for my submission to her greater wisdom by telling me the Provençal names of the trees and plants we

passed on our weary way back, up the steps and over the rocky ground outside the great Church—among them the "*Falabréguié*" or *Micoucoulier* (*Celtis Australis*) which Mistral and Daudet constantly mention; for it is one of the most popular and beautiful trees of this southern land, with small finely-pointed leaves on slender leaf stalks and minute black berries. She also gathered me sprays of the little wild purple-mauve *Plumbago*, wild mint, and thyme, all so fragrant and aromatic that I ceased to wonder at the mad desire of the immortal "*Chèvre de Monsieur Seguin*" to escape to the hills and taste such dainties: "*la cabro de Moussu Seguin, que se battégué touto la niue emé lou loup, e piei lou matin lou loup la mangé.*"¹

St. Trophime's cell had proved the limit of my energy; and though I was sorry not to see it, I sternly refused all invitations to investigate the curious Chapelle de St. Croix a little way beyond the foot of the hill. So bidding a friendly farewell to our charming old lady, and casting a longing glance along the white road leading towards the distant hills that shelter the ruined rock-city of Les Baux, we turned homewards. The dust and heat were great, and I expressed

¹ "*Lettres de mon moulin.*"—Alphonse Daudet.

a strong desire to our civil brown-faced cocher for grapes, if grapes could be bought, as we passed a long, narrow two-wheeled cart piled with round tubs of the purple fruit. Those, he said, with a face of disgust, were *abimés*. But from that moment we saw him keeping an anxious and knowing eye on every roadside vineyard. Presently came a sudden halt. The horse contented itself with the handiest branches of narrow-leaved willow by the road. While its dark-skinned, merry-faced young master jumped down hat in hand, apologizing deeply that "it was not possible to say whether the grapes we desired might be good. They were only wine grapes; and all depended on the kind. But, *enfin*, if the ladies were content to try!"—And with a bound he sprang over the wide wet ditch; threw himself knife in hand on the best vine he could discover; and plunging his arm through the beautiful tendrils, cut three enormous purple bunches! "Enough, enough," I cried, somewhat scandalized at such cool appropriation of unknown neighbour's goods. And back came the valiant Provençal. But alack! the take off was bad, the jump wider than he thought, and one foot went in with a splash so great that we all three shouted with laughter. Happily the

grapes were safely landed, and placed in our eager hands in a moment with fresh profuse apologies for their possible poverty. Ah! those never-to-be-forgotten grapes! Big, purple, like Black Hamburgs that would have fetched 2s. a lb. anywhere in England—warm outside with the hot sun, and melting with cool refreshing sweetness within.

Long may that merry, brown-faced Provençal lad live and prosper. For never did two thirsty travellers have better refreshment than as they drove along the wide white roads towards the towers of Arles, each with the firm stalk of a big bunch of stolen purple grapes in one hand, busily picking off the luscious berries with the other, while the late September sun lowered in the west, and cast long shadows of wayside trees across the rich and beautiful vineyards.

CHAPTER XIX

THE MUSÉON ARLATEN

ARLES, *Sept.*

“A fructu frumenti, vini, et olei sui, multiplicati sunt.”

THERE are two Museums in Arles. Both are small: but both are full of interest, whether for the lover of the antique or the lover of this singular country Provence.

The Musée Lapidaire stands opposite St. Trophime in the Place de la République, modest in size, but richly rewarding to the antiquarian or the artist, as it contains a remarkable collection of Roman and early Christian sarcophagi from the Aliscamps, some of which are, as Mérimée said nearly eighty years ago, “of very great importance on account of the precious indications they give us. The tomb of a musician, or at all events a dilettante, shows a great variety of musical instruments, among which may be seen a hydraulic organ.”

Among the Christian sarcophagi is a very fine one—that of the priest Concordius—on which the

apostles are sculptured; on others we see the miracles of Christ, the Good Shepherd, Pilate washing his hands, &c. &c.

Among the antiques is a graceful though broken statue of a dancer, the beautiful bust of Livia from the Theatre, now placed on an altar to the "Good Goddess"; and above all the lovely bust of Marcellus (?), the most engaging head of a child in sculpture I know, and perfect save for injury to the nose. There are several very fine Corinthian capitals; many fragments from the theatre and other buildings; and the pedestal of the great obelisque which stands in the centre of the Place de la République outside—a monolith of grey granite from the Esterels, which was recovered from the Rhône in 1676, where it had lain for centuries. But perhaps the most curious of all the antiquities in the museum are some long leaden pipes lying among all the sarcophagi, altars, and sculptures. These were the pipes which conveyed the waters of the Roman aqueduct across the Rhône, in whose muddy bed they were discovered; and they bear upon them the stamp of the Roman plumber, who made them 2000 years ago—"C. Canthius Porthinus fac"—a fine example to the plumbers of the 20th century!

The *Muséon Arlaten*, or Musée Arlésienne,



MARCELLUS (P). MUSEUM OF ARLES

was founded quite recently by the great poet Mistral himself, to form a record for all time of the peculiar local customs, industries, occupations, dress, natural history, &c. of Provence, now in peril of being forgotten in the rush of modern life. For this land of Provence has never been really French : but has always formed a separate little kingdom whether under Kings of Arles or Counts of Provence, or consuls of the 17th century—independent, autonomous, self-sufficing, and self-supporting, with its own manners and customs, its own race, its own language. At Arles, more especially, one realizes at once that the inhabitants are indeed a *race à part*, a type wholly unlike any other citizens of France. And there is every reason that this should be so ; for three potent racial influences have been at work here for over 2000 years.

Long before the Romans came into Gaul, Arles was an important port of the great Greek Colony of Massilia. And when in 123 B.C. the Greeks of Marseilles—to their undoing as it eventually proved—called in the Romans to help them repel the tribes of the southern Gaul who threatened to overpower them, Arles soon became one of the most important Roman cities of the south from its position on the Rhône. While centuries later

during the Saracen's invasion and occupation, as the famous Via Aurelia from Rome to Cadiz passed directly through the city, crossing the Rhône to Trinquetaille by the bridge whose foundations we may still see, Arles naturally formed one of their chief posts. Thus Greece, Rome, and Spain have left their indelible mark upon the city and on the people. And in the three types of beauty that are to be found in Arles—one sees traces of the fair-skinned Greek, the proud and stately Roman, the dark vivid Spaniard. For the beauty of *L'Arlèsienne* is undeniable. In these few days I have seen more superbly beautiful women in Arles than one sees in as many months elsewhere. As we came out of the Amphitheatre the other day a mother and daughter stood talking to their friends on the steps, very tall, nobly proportioned, proudly posed like antique statues on those antique steps as if the whole world was theirs by right. The beauty of the girl—her features regular as those on a Roman coin, her dark eyes, masses of black hair, and strongly marked eyebrows, contrasting with the exquisitely fair skin that seemed proof against even the southern sun, with rich warm colour in her cheeks, while on her full bare throat, white as milk, lay a little gold cross—her beauty,



An Arlésienne.

I say, was so astonishing that I had to pause and walk slowly round the group the better to feast my eyes on such rare perfection. The mother, almost as handsome, who perceived my unconcealed admiration, did not seem to resent it; while the girl stood, apparently, quite unconscious. And S. and I agreed that never before had we seen so beautiful a creature. For the type here is a high one intellectually. The Arlésienne is no mere stupid, impassive beauty, a doll or statue to be stared at. One need only look at the noble line of features and at the full sensuous lips, to see that she has been justly credited with plenty of fire both of intellect and of passion beneath her majestic statuesque beauty, which is set off by the somewhat severe costume, only softened by the full white fichu against the bare throat. As the Provençal verse says—

“ Couifado a se mettre a gainoun
 Voudrias, sus sa blanco capello
 Vous pausa, coumo un parpaïoun
 E ie counta di farfantello.”

But if one wishes to see what the gala dress of the Provençale was 60 to 100 years ago one must go to the Muséon Arlaten. For there we find a remarkable collection of the rich broché silk and velvet dresses, the embroidered fichus,

the delicate laces, the huge enveloping *mantes* in silks or stuffs, in which the grandmothers of the Arlésiennes of to-day used to drape themselves on high days and holidays. The plain black bodice whether of silk or stuff was *de rigueur* then as it is now, its long sleeves to the wrist devoid of any trimming: but the skirt and fichu may be of any coloured material—from velvet to cotton. And in a curious local scene arranged with life-size figures in a lighted room—*La Visite à l'accouchée*—one gets a vivid idea of what the richness of these dresses may be, as well as of the luxurious interior of a well-to-do Provençal house. For the old furniture of Provence is as handsome as that of Brittany though quite unlike it; and we may here see examples of inlaid presses and cupboards from many a fine old “Mas,” as the great farms are called.

Here in this little Museum, the great poet and his loyal helpers have gathered together examples of all that pertains to the industries of Provence, even to models of the bread; for it here takes special shapes—which we first met at Avignon—long thin rolls, the outer sides turned over to meet each other; and lengths of bread cut partly through at regular intervals while moist, so that each division bakes into a sort of pin-cushion



OLIVE GATHERING. PROVENCE



TRUFFLE HUNTING. PROVENCE

shape which can be broken off separately. Silk is shown in all its stages, from the *magnan* (silk-worms) eating mulberry leaves, to the delicate woven silks of Nîmes and Lyons. Here too are olives—that great industry, whose gathering makes an excuse for a perfect holiday in the late autumn—as Mistral says in “Mirèio”—

“Vengue Toussant, e li Baussenco
De vermeialo, d’amelenco,
Te van clafi saco e bourrenco!
Tout en consounejant n’accamparien ben mai.”¹
“Mirèio,” Cant. i. 10.

Models of truffles remind us that two-thirds of all the truffles of France come from the rich land of Provence. As the illustration shows, an old sow serves as the pointer who finds them. A sharp watch has to be kept when she begins to grout up the earth lest she should devour the dainty herself, and the moment she turns it up it is snatched away with a little forked stick. Those who have never had the luck to taste fresh Provençal truffles have no idea of what is delicious. For when fresh they are perfectly harmless to the digestion, and eat like short pie-crust instead of deadly black leather. I first

¹ “When Toussaint comes, and the maidens of Baux—with green olives and almonds will fill sacks and sheets—while singing they will gather them all the faster.”

made their acquaintance at Avignon where they were served with almost every dish; and on expressing my appreciation of their excellence to my friend the elderly maître d'hôtel, his answer, accompanied by a beaming smile of pride, was "La Provence est le pays de *toutes* les bonnes choses."

Certainly it is the land of delicious fruit; and the abundance of fruit of all kinds is surprising. I used to find on my little table at Avignon merely as hors d'œuvres before déjeuner, two long sections of water melon, a dish of little purple figs, one of green olives, another of brown salted olives, besides the usual radish and butter, sardine or tunny of the ordinary French breakfast table. While at dessert came a pyramid of superb pears, peaches, and white and black grapes—the *raisins claires* and *raisins œillades* of Daudet's *Petit Chose*. And at Tarascon we found "ces beaux raisins muscats gonflés de sucre qui s'échelonnent au bord du Rhône," which the birds of passage coveted, but dared not touch for fear of coming too near Tartarin and his valiant chasseurs. For the whole of the Rhône valley is, as I have said, one vast orchard and vineyard. At Lyons the fruit is so abundant that my friend Mlle Therese I,

told me the pears at her mother's country place did not pay for picking—as the best would only sell at 2 centimes the kilo—about a penny for two pounds. The very bonbons take the form of fruits; bunches of sugar grapes beautifully modelled hang in strings in the confectioners' windows. And at Lyons besides *galets du Rhône* and *cailloux de la Saône*, so exactly like little pebbles that one expected to break one's teeth over the soft sugar that clothed yet softer fruit paste—there were dishes of minute and exquisite sugar carrots and turnips, radishes, potatoes, onions, currants, cherries, and almonds.

But to return to the Muséon Arlaten. In the centre of one room a life-size figure of a “gardien de la Camargue” in his working dress with his long trident, bestrides a stuffed pony, one of those rather ugly white ponies of the Camargue that have lived half-wild there and on the Crau for hundreds of years; debased descendants it is supposed of Arabs brought over from Africa—probably by the Saracens. They are a curious race, all white, standing between 13 and 14 hands, extremely hardy, and thinking nothing of carrying a gardien de taureaux with his fiancée *en croupe* for a long day's journey. All sorts of strange birds and beasts have dwelt in that strange delta

of the Camargue—an island between the two branches of the Rhône which divides just above Arles—the petit Rhône flowing into the Mediterranean at Aigues Mortes. A stuffed beaver in this same room reminds one that until quite recently beavers abounded there; indeed it is whispered that they still exist in secret and lonely spots. And here may still be found rare specimens of the beautiful pink flamingo; while the ibis and pelican once frequented its lagoons and salt marshes, its reeds and tamarisks and parasol pines. But the Île de la Camargue—the “field of reeds”—is now mainly given over to vast flocks of sheep and herds of cattle—those splendid golden-brown cattle that furnish the great bulls for the *courses de Taureaux* of the south of France—and to vast salt works; and each year these rare visitants from Africa grow rarer. I was also glad to see an excellent collection of the plants, trees and flowers of Provence with their names in Latin, French and Provençal. In another room I found an interesting collection of tambourins—very different instruments to the ordinary notion of a tambourin. These Provençal tambourins are light long wooden drums, which are carried slung over the left arm; with the right hand the tambourinaire wields his light



PROVENÇAL TAMBOURINAIRE

baguette, while with his left he plays the little three-holed fife. Many of the tambourins in the Museum are extremely old; the wood of their thin fluted cases is polished like that of a Stradivarius, and they are almost as precious; for a good tambourin is a family possession, handed down with traditional airs from father to son. Unfortunately I have had no chance here of hearing these famous tambourinaires, who at certain seasons of the year hold concours at which prizes are given to the best performer. But it was interesting to see at last the instrument on which turns so much of the tragedy of that great book *Numa Roumestan*—perhaps the finest of all Daudet's works; for in it his delineation of the southern temperament as personified in Numa is a masterpiece, while the whole book is a perfect mine of information about Provence itself.

Modern Provence has indeed been fortunate in having two such men as the poet Mistral, and the prose-poet Alphonse Daudet, to make it known to the world. And if any one desires to know more of the genius of that fair and fertile land, its people, its traditions, its legends, its superstitions, let them read the immortal *Lettres de Mon Moulin* and *Numa Roumestan*; and then, if they

can find a translation, still better if they can read it in the original stately Provençal of Frédéric Mistral, let them make a study of that great poem *Mirèio*, better known by Gounod's Opera *Mireille*—the tragic romance of “uno chato de Prouvenco,” a maiden of Provence, and his later poem *Calendal*—“un enfant de Cassis—un pauvre petit pêcheur d'anchois”—and they may rest with the certainty that they have learnt all they need about the temperament and life of Provence, as it has been in the near past, and as one fears it may not be much longer, in these days of motor cars and what are called “increased facilities of communication.” For, as Daudet truly says, it is Provence itself that Mistral has enshrined in these two great poems: “C'est la Provence . . . avec son histoire, ses mœurs, ses légendes, ses paysages, tout un peuple naïf et libre qui a trouvé son grand poète avant de mourir. . . . Et maintenant tracez des chemins de fer, plantez des poteaux à télégraphes, chassez la langue provençale des écoles. La Provence vivra éternellement dans Mireille et dans Calendal.”

These words were written over thirty years ago. And yet, looking at it to-day Provence is strangely unmoved by modern hurry. The tourist is a creature to be tolerated—even welcomed as

a lamb to be fleeced : but he makes no real difference to the country itself, as in other parts of France the poor thing most undoubtedly does. Save for the hotel-keepers, the cab-drivers, and the little shops of so-called "antiquities," all goes on in Arles as if the great world outside Provence was non-existent. And this is certainly one of its great charms. The race is very strong, intensely individual, and has an absolute belief in itself. Let us therefore hope that it may withstand levelling influences from the outer world for many a long year ; and continue to venerate "Moussu Mistral" as its popular hero, as it does to-day, and rightly.

CHAPTER XX

A ROUGH JOURNEY

HÔTEL DU LUXEMBOURG,
NÎMES, *Sept. 23.*

DEAR ——. I hope my telegram this morning did not alarm you. But I thought that if the English papers contained any such account as the French do of the awful storm of yesterday, you might be uneasy on my behalf. Thank God, we got here safe last night, and only about two hours late—some trains were delayed for six hours. I have had one or two rough journeys in my life: but I have never, I think, been so really alarmed before.

The weather was vile at Arles, rain at intervals, heavy exhausting heat, mosquitoes swarming in my room in consequence; and as a climax S. came in yesterday morning with a face of horror, saying she had found "something dreadful" in her bed! "Not a b flat?" I asked dismayed. "Yes!" "Then we go this afternoon to Nîmes *via* Tarascon." For really bugs as well as fleas, enormous black ants, and mosquitoes by the score

in one's rooms, were beyond endurance. So after shaking the dust, or rather mud, off our feet, we left that vile hotel. Why some one does not make a fortune by starting a really good modern hotel at Arles is a mystery to me. It would be full from one year's end to another. This and the other hotel which is said to be no better, are never empty; for in these days of automobiles Provence is as much frequented by the tourist in summer as in winter.

As we arrived at the station down came the rain; and as there is no waiting-room we had to take refuge with dogs, soldiers, work-people, loafers, coachmen, &c., in the one corner of the ticket office which was not swept by rain, and managed to make a rush across the rails into our train between two downpours at 4.30. And just in time. For before the train left the station the most terrific thunder, tempest, and simply tropic rain, burst overhead. In fact when we did start the train had some difficulty at first in making headway. The lightning literally stabbed the country the whole way to Tarascon, till our eyes were almost blinded. The thunder volleyed and roared continuously above the noises of the noisy train. The trees bent double; and the poor vines, all hung with fruit, stood deep in water.

At Tarascon we had to change in the midst of the raging tempest on that exposed embankment along which Tartarin's devoted camel came trotting. The train was long; our carriage stopped well outside the platform; and as I shrieked to a half-drowned employé to open the door and carry our bags, he yelled back we were to wait, as our carriage would draw into the station. We did wait: and to our utter dismay the train drew up just as far out on the further side of the station, and then prepared to go on to Lyons. In the furious storm, lashing rain and blinding lightning, we had been utterly forgotten. Not a man was within sight or hearing. So in despair I managed to scramble down on the flooded rails, raced dripping into the station, seized a porter, and thanks to fright and fury became so eloquent that he was sufficiently impressed to brave the storm, and save S. and the handbags from an involuntary journey north. We were both wet from head to foot—for umbrellas were impossible—as we ran over the rails, and when at last we got into an empty first class carriage in the Nîmes train it was to find that only three out of the eight seats were fairly dry.

But this was a mere trifle to what was coming. Five minutes before we crossed the Rhône, which

was roaring down angry and turbid having risen nearly 20 feet, the statue of Notre Dame des Voyageurs on the Beaucaire end of the bridge which we had seen last week in glorious sunshine, was struck by lightning. When we steamed over the lofty railway bridge and viaduct past Beaucaire we saw in the gloaming that the poor olives were standing up to their waists in wide lakes ; and as we went westward the floods, seen by the light of three hideous, yet beautiful thunderstorms, grew worse and worse. Then the train slackened and began to go carefully. And at length S., who was on the leeward side of the carriage with the window open, cried "We're going through a river!" And sure enough there was a raging torrent racing down the line with us between the banks. It was really horrible—the rush of the tearing water, the splashing swash of the wheels, lighted only by flashes of lightning every five seconds on three different sides ; for it was then six o'clock and dark. The engine-driver had slowed down to five or six miles an hour ; and so we crawled on till the water came up to the footboards of the carriage, and you know how high those are on French railways. I assure you one prayed hard that the line might not be washed away beneath us. This continued for many miles. We crept

past a little wayside station, the hapless man in charge swinging a lantern and shouting that the line was all right, as he stood on the platform with the water above his knees.

Then gradually the line began to rise a little ; and by degrees through the torrents on either side we saw the ends of sleepers appear, and we knew the worst was over. Cantonniers stood on the line and shouted to the engine-driver—who I felt deserved a medal ; and at last we got free and ran on presently at a decent pace into Nîmes, arriving there at nearly 8 P.M., very deeply thankful and not a little exhausted.

Leaving our luggage to come up later, I managed by dint of bribes to commandeer a carriage—apparently a private one—to take us up to this excellent hotel, so tired out, that wet and battered as we were, I took S. into dinner with me before even looking at our rooms, and devoured the best dinner I have had for many a day. But for the mosquitoes and the prices, I should like to stay here for several days ; for Nîmes is a beautiful city, and the hotel excellent, though costly. Their name (the mosquitoes') alas ! is legion, and their species a specially venomous one. I have my mosquito net and slept well last night, despite the deafening noise of the street under my

window. But S. never closed her eyes all night as they swarmed in her room ; and even as I sit writing I get a bite at times. So I shall fly before their wicked hordes on Saturday to clean, cool Lyons ; and up to Paris on Tuesday ; though really the beauty of everything to-day after the storm, in the clear air, the intensely blue sky, the brilliant roasting sun, is enchanting.

It has been a great disappointment not to go to Les Saintes Maries, with all the strange and touching traditions that belong to that strange spot down on the shore of the Mediterranean. I had been looking forward to the run through the Camargue with its enormous *manades* of golden-brown cattle, its wild-looking gardiens on their little white horses, its rare wild birds, and its salt works. And besides the legend of its being the landing-place of the blessed Saints, it is there that Mistral's tragic "Mireille" ends. I had also hoped to see St. Gilles and its famous triple portal, even finer than that of St. Trophime. But the weather was so exhausting at Arles the day before the great storm came on, that a day's excursion, especially to a place renowned for mosquitoes and fever, was out of the question.

I had therefore to content myself with a late afternoon drive with the merry brown-faced young

driver who drove us to Montmajour. I wanted to see my beloved Rhône there at close quarters, and suggested that the quays would be interesting. Whereupon his good little black horse was calmly turned out of the roadway of the boulevard and driven along the open quay, deserted save for a few cats and devoid of parapet, while the Rhône, far from "stagnating" as in Dante's day, was swirling along below it at a fine pace. But as the black horse was unmoved we accepted the singular situation with comparative calm, though I was not sorry to regain the ordinary roadway at the great bridge that crosses the river to Trinquetaille. It is built on the foundation of the Roman bridge that carried the Aurelian Way from Rome to Cadiz across the Rhône; and close by we drove to inspect the Tour de la Trouille as it is vulgarly called—an interesting round tower of Roman brick, forming part of the palace of Constantine the Great, who spent much time here, and in it Constantine the younger was born.

Then the little driver suggested *la route de Marseilles*, when I demanded a country drive; and off we set south-eastwards along the Aurelian Way and across the main line of the P.L.M.—a curious contrast when one comes to think of it—

with the Roman aqueduct running alongside for a mile or so, and communicating with the famous Canal Craponne which we presently crossed. In the low rich meadows the third crop of hay was being gathered in ; fig-trees covered with fruit made me wish they were within reach ; and every house front was festooned with vines hung thick with purple or white grapes. At the top of a long hill the road was sheltered on the west by a thick line of the most magnificent old cypresses I have ever seen, with great red stems and roots like writhing snakes. It would have been good to drive on and on along this grand road for hours—with the handsome buildings of one fine “ Mas ” after another standing in the midst of their vast vineyards and cornfields and olive grounds, behind the sheltering lines of cypress to defend them against the mistral’s fury. But there was no mistral that day—nothing but deadly heat, overcast sky, strange evil-looking leaden clouds coming up rapidly from the south, and a weird oppressive sense of impending catastrophe. So we turned back ; and before we reached Arles a few heavy drops began to fall, the precursors of our terrible storm of yesterday.—Yours ever, R. G. K.

CHAPTER XXI

AFTER THE STORM

NÎMES, *Sept.* 23.

As we set forth this morning in glorious hot sunshine, and light clear air delightfully refreshed after the terrific storm of yesterday, it was difficult to believe we had not dreamt all the horrors of our alarming journey. Our first quest, naturally, was for the Arènes; and it was not difficult to find them; for they stand in their glory just beyond the trees of the handsome esplanade in front of the hotel.

As we drove up to them we realized how magnificently they are placed and how perfect is the exterior—far more perfect indeed than the Amphitheatre at Arles, though the interior at Arles is much more perfect than that of Nîmes. But the position of the Amphitheatre of Nîmes, standing as it does on level ground with a wide open space round it, enables one to get away from it and look on it as a great whole, which makes it infinitely more impressive. For although



LES ARÈNES. NÎMES



UPPER GALLERY OF THE AMPHITHEATRE. NÎMES

it is slightly smaller than the Arènes of Arles, and considerably less than the Coliseum of Rome, it is in far better preservation.¹

Like all the important Roman buildings in Gaul, it is constructed of huge blocks of stone, fitted together without mortar or cement. As at Arles it consists of two stages each of sixty arcades, which are separated on the lower tier by square pilasters without bases, and on the upper by Doric engaged columns. An attic supported by capitals runs round great part of the top, with consoles at intervals pierced with holes as in the theatre at Orange for the masts of the velarium. And, as at Arles, the most striking feature in the whole building are the deep vaults of these arcades where black shadow hangs for ever, the lower openings alternately leading across the lower corridor up to a stairway or down to the arena—the upper ones corresponding with openings to the gradins on the opposite side of the wide couloir that runs all round the first floor.

It is evident that the exterior of the Arènes was never fully completed, as only fragments of decoration are to be seen here and there, such

¹ The ellipse of the interiors of the three amphitheatres measure, roughly speaking—Coliseum, 188 metres $\times$ 155. Arles, 136 $\times$ 107. Nîmes, 133 $\times$ 101.

as the heads and forequarters of two gigantic bulls over the north-west door, one of the four principal entrances. But it was the habit of the Roman architects to build first and sculpture their decorations on the spot afterwards; and we constantly find, in Gaul, that columns, doorways, &c. have been merely blocked out in the rough, waiting for an opportunity which has never come for the sculptor's work upon them—as in the “Plan de l'Aiguille” at Vienne.

The great out-hanging bulls' heads, sombre monsters, have been supposed to be a compliment to Augustus, who was born, according to Suetonius, in a house decorated with bulls' heads which was afterwards turned into a temple; and on other buildings, such as the fine *Porte d'Auguste* in Nîmes, this symbol is also found. Be this as it may, nothing could be more appropriate than bulls' heads to an amphitheatre in Nîmes; for the city has been famous for bull-fights from time immemorial, and the walls of the square outside the *Arènes* were plastered with posters setting forth the attractions of a great bull-fight with celebrated Spanish toreadors, which was to take place in a fortnight's time, while every shop was full of photographs of “*Courses de Taureaux*.”



La Maison Carrée, Nîmes.

We did not attempt to explore the interior of the Arènes to-day ; for our evil dream journey was beginning to prove its reality and we were both deadly tired. So we drove on by the wide and handsome Boulevard Victor Hugo to the Maison Carrée. But all fatigue was forgotten before that exquisite gem—perfect as some precious jewel from the hand of a cunning goldsmith of the Renaissance. The fluted columns with their Corinthian capitals, graceful as springing fern fronds in May—the marvellous frieze with its delicate tracery as if drawn by fairy fingers—the sharp cuttings of the modillions of the rich cornice—the deep shadow of the stately portico—the severely noble lines of the pediment above it—and the warm tender maize colour of the stone against the intensely blue sky—formed a picture that can never fade from one's enchanted vision.

As I felt when I stood gazing at the Arc de Triomphe at Orange, what does it signify if pedants squabble over dates and details? Mr Henry James has said with that felicity that is all his own, “ Art is the one corner of human life in which we may take our ease. . . . Wherever her shining standard floats the need for apology and compromise is over ; there it is enough

simply that we please and are pleased. There the tree is judged by its fruits. If these are sweet the tree is justified—and not less the consumer.” But when some unhappy traveller attempts to enter upon the world of Art under the ægis of the pedant, “Instead of a garden of delight he finds a sort of assize court in perpetual session. Instead of a place in which human responsibilities are lightened and suspended, he finds a region governed by a kind of Draconian legislation. His responsibilities indeed are tenfold increased ; the gulf between truth and error is for ever yawning at his feet ; the pains and penalties of this same error are advertized in apocalyptic terminology, upon a thousand sign-posts ; and the rash intruder soon begins to look back with infinite longing to the lost paradise of the artless.”¹

Deeply at one with these words of true wisdom, it came to pass therefore on this heavenly day of sunshine and colour that I stood entranced before the mere beauty of the Maison Carrée with as little concern as to whether its proportions were exact, whether Seguiet’s or Pelet’s version of the inscription on the frieze was the correct one, whether it was built under Augustus or under Agrippa, as the cigales who played their little

¹ *Italian Hours*, p. 130. Henry James.



THE ROMAN BATHS, NÎMES

fiddles in the trees across the street, or the swallows who swept in shrill squeaking clouds round the cornice as they did 2000 years ago. For learning is a thing before which one bows reverently and gratefully. Pedantry quite another, which eats the very heart out of all delight.

At length we roused our cocher and his good black horse from their repose in the shadow of a tall house and drove on, till we turned at the sinister place de la Bouquerie, where once the gibbet stood and the Camisards were executed, along a rushing canal by the Quai de la Fontaine to the Jardin de la Fontaine, about which I knew nothing save from some admirable photographs which lay with equally admirable rolls on my breakfast table in the morning. And when we stopped outside the grille at the entrance and were told we could drive no further, I rebelled, being very weary. Our cocher however was firm—nay almost menacing, “Madame *must* descend. Madame *must* see the marvels within. Ah! it is but a step! Madame could not possibly be fatigued. She would have no cause to regret seeing sights so unique in the world.” And so on and so forth, until the cunning fellow had given the concierge time to arrive. And sure enough Madame did not regret.

Imagine a series of 18th century basins, a miniature Versailles of balustrades, flights of steps, statues, vases, and little amours, with the Roman baths of ancient Nemausa as a foundation to them, stretching away between luxuriant avenues of trees from the base of a steep hillside where the *source*, the famous Fountain, surges up from the rock in wild eddying circles almost overflowing its wide pool, and rushes down under the bridges, and through the baths where it has risen nearly to the capitals of the pillars, and so away to feed the canals that carry it through the city. While on the steep slope of the hill above white terraces gleam among feathery pines, ever-green oaks, Falabréguié and many more unknown trees, whose foliage of an indescribable cloudy softness reminds one of a Corot landscape.

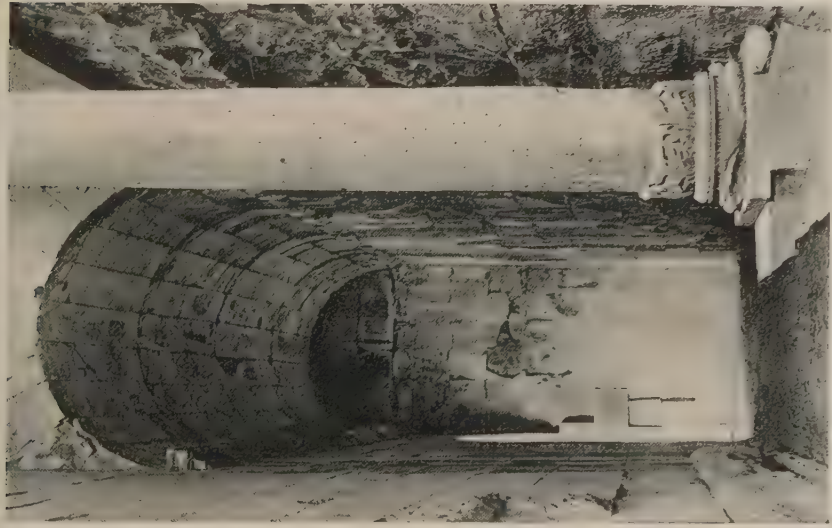
It was so wholly unexpected, this delicious bit of Louis XV. decoration in the midst of ancient Rome, this singular contrast of the voluptuous, redundant 18th century art with the severity of the well-ordered classic, that I was fairly captivated. For on that square walled garden in the centre of the baths, with its statues, its vases, its plump little Loves, its wealth of flowers and shrubs, once stood four lofty Corinthian pillars, supporting a platform roof on which the fine

ladies of Nemausa were wont to take a sun-bath after bathing under the arcades below. And in order to augment the waters of the fountain when it did not suffice for the needs of the great colony, the Pont du Gard was built to bring a further supply by the aqueduct from the Eure and the Airin twenty-five miles away. There was no lack of water to-day, thanks to the storm of our evil dream journey. But the concierge told me that even yesterday morning the pool of the source was half dry, and the rushing torrent flowing down to the canals, now equal to a fourth part of the waters of the Seine, was a mere feeble trickle.

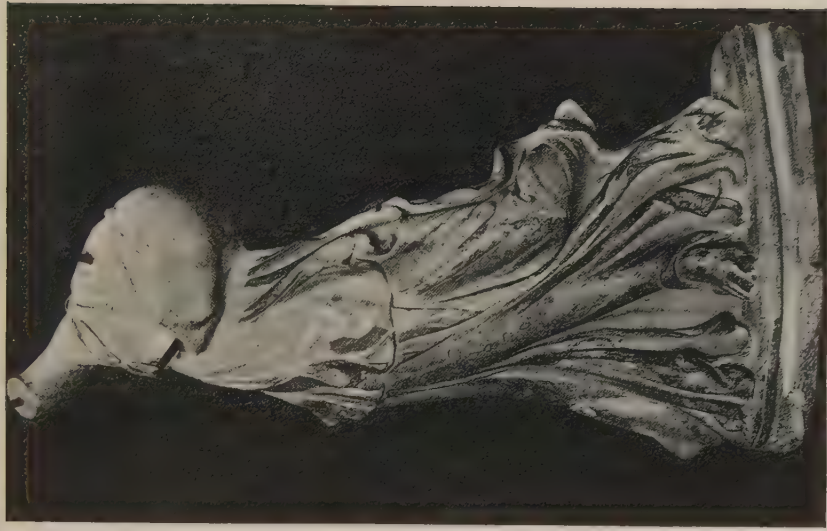
Part of this spring supplied the Nymphœum close by, now miscalled the Temple of Diana. Since it was built in the days of Augustus many and strange are the vicissitudes of this interesting building, with its ribbed vaulted roof—just like those of many of the Romanesque churches we have seen in the last six weeks—and its entablature supported by fluted columns. After the 5th century it was dedicated to Christian uses, and in A.D. 991 passed into the hands of the sisters of the order of St. Benedict. Later during the wars of religion it was used by farmers for various purposes and completely ruined—we

may remember that the exquisite Maison Carrée served for a considerable period as a granary and hay barn. Then at last in 1750, Maréchal, who constructed the charming Jardins de la Fontaine and the canals, restored its broken fragments as far as it was possible, and turned it into the Museum of antiquities it is to-day. Next to the details of what remains of the original building, which are extremely beautiful and distinctly Greek in style, the most interesting object to me was the one surviving pillar of the four which stood in the centre of the Roman baths. With part of a second column it was brought here for safety, the others having disappeared—probably broken up for building stone. Its base is remarkable and ornate; in fact it is known as the “*colonne à base sculptée*.” The lower torus is a cable, the astragal finely fluted, the upper torus an egg and ball moulding, above which acanthus leaves surround the base of the finely fluted column itself, a most unusual decoration in such a position.

As we slowly made our way back to the gates, across the 18th century terraces and bridges of the ancient Roman baths, amid brilliant flower beds and shady trees, the cigales were fiddling so loud in the branches, intoxicated by the sunshine,



PILLAR IN THE NYMPHAEUM. NÎMES



GREEK DANCER, MAISON CARRÉE. NÎMES
P. 248

that S. could hardly believe that insects and not some strange birds were making such a din, until we managed to see one of the little fiddlers whirr away from his perch overhead and set to work again a few feet off. Our cocher, triumphant at finding our submission to his superior wisdom had been so well rewarded, desired to drive us up at once to the Tour Magne on the summit of that enchanting wooded hill above the Fountain. But there are limits to human endurance. We were tired and hungry. And the impressions of the morning had been so perfect and distinct that I had no desire to spoil them. Far better never to see the Tour Magne, than mar these by what has been called "*le trop plein en voyage.*" Why should we try to see every single thing in a place, because, as people are wont to argue, we may never come there again? For this is not really seeing. Better far, at least so it seems to me, is it to preserve one or two vivid impressions intact, be they of some great work of art, of some historic building, of some noble landscape, which have yielded up their hidden secrets to the questioning soul, and remain for ever a precious possession full of meaning and beauty to the questioner, than to fill the rubbish basket of the memory with endless tags of so-called "sights," that have

merely passed in rapid succession before the outer vision as the moving particles of a kaleidoscope, leaving nothing but a confused glitter of worthless fragments.

As it happens I have not seen the Tour Magne after all ; and fortified by these reflections I am consoled. Though our cocher agreed to return for us at three, the faithless wretch did not appear, thinking, I imagine, that I should not be so foolish as to overpay him largely a second time, and that a fresh victim might be more profitable ; while the only other carriage we could find was such a bad one that a long drive was out of the question. However the city itself furnished more than enough to interest us as we drove round the boulevards, which follow the line of the walls that once enclosed the Roman city. The grand Porte d'Auguste, the principal entrance to ancient Nemausa standing on the famous Domitian way, is still perfect ; and on the frieze above its double arched gateway with two small side entrances for foot passengers, we may still read :

IMP. Cæsar. Divi. F. Avgvstvs. Cos. XI. Trib.
Potest. VIII.

Portas. Mvros. Qve. Col. Dat.

This, and the Porte de France, a little distance

beyond the Arènes, are the only two which remain of the ten gates of Roman Nîmes.

But the quarter which lies within the limits of what was the Roman city is full of more recent and poignant interest. And the labyrinth of narrow tortuous streets with their dark archways and black passages, which lie behind the Grand and Petit Cours (now known as the Boulevard Gambetta), have been the scene of the fiercest *emeutes* of this loud-voiced hot-headed city, partly Catholic, partly Protestant, partly republican, and yet more royalist. Behind the house in which Alphonse Daudet was born, to use the graphic words of his brother Ernest, "lies the Enclos-de-Rey, that terrible royalist faubourg whose inhabitants, silk weavers or labourers, have furnished a noisy and rough contingent for the last hundred years to the uprisings of the old Roman city.

"At one extremity of the Petit Cours lies the place des Carmes, at the other the place Ballore.

"All the political life of Nîmes in the past has centred between these two points, favourable for tumultuous gatherings, united by a wide roadway planted with double lines of plane-trees whose every leaf the summer powders with fine white

dust, and fills their sun-cracked branches with cigales.

"It is upon the Petit Cours that the most bloody episodes of the Revolution, the most tragic scenes of la *Bagarre*, ran their course."

M. Daudet tells how in his childhood in the forties, he and his brother as they stood outside the door of their old home the *maison* Sabran, enjoying the cool air, would be hurriedly called in by their nurse, while men and women fled on all sides at the distant cry of "Zou! zou!" the usual signal for a Nîmois riot between the Catholics and Protestants of the Enclos de Rey. Along this Cours after Waterloo, in 1815, General Gilly rode away from Nîmes at the head of his chasseurs, "la rage au cœur, la colère aux yeux, la bride aux dents, pistolet dans une main, sabre dans l'autre," abandoning the unhappy Bonapartists to the furies of the reaction. And here again in 1831, the Catholics gathered in sombre fury when the crosses which had been erected in all the public squares were taken down by order of the government.

There was no sign of disturbance on this hot September day, as we made our way through the heart of this strange quarter to the Cathedral of Saint Castor, built on the ruins of Augustus's

temple. Charlemagne gave it his protection in A.D. 808. It was rebuilt in 1030, and restored in 1096 by Pope Urban II., with three naves and a façade richly ornamented with sculpture. During the wars of religion in the 16th and 17th centuries it was twice ruined and twice rebuilt; and all that survives of the very interesting 11th century building is the tower and part of the façade joining it, high up on which a most curious ancient frieze of sculptures resembling those on early Christian sarcophagi is the only vestige of its rich decoration.

It was a relief to get away from the fierce and cruel memories that haunt those dark narrow streets, and steep one's mind afresh in the stately severity of the classic idea. For I had made a compact in the morning with the intelligent keeper of the *Maison Carrée*—as the place at that hour was overrun with visitors—that if I came back just before closing time he should let me stay on and see the treasures within that exquisite shrine in peace. And more true to his word than our faithless driver, he gave me half-an-hour of delightful content, in which to study the beautiful Greek dancer, the *Venus of Nîmes*, and the singularly interesting little *Caligula* represented as an infant *Hercules*, at my leisure.

CHAPTER XXII

THE PONT DU GARD

NÎMES, *Sept.* 24.

WE ran through terraced olive grounds, past villas with charming gardens in which were many tall cypress spires, as we left Nîmes this morning for Remoulins; and out into endless vineyards on the plain where the vintagers are busily picking the purple fruit. Then came arable land with mulberry trees and olives standing in the stubble or the tilth; fruit-trees and tall reeds, rows of cypresses and white-walled, brown-roofed houses; more vineyards with leaves beginning to turn crimson and gold; carts of grapes drawn by golden-dun oxen making their slow creaking way along field tracks to the wine-press of the nearest "Mas," where the great wooden gates stood wide open to admit the precious load; and on the north a background to all the fertile land, of low arid hills softly grey with olives.

Water still stood in low-lying places among

the olives—many of them very large and old. And as we neared Remoulins, the Gardon was racing down in a foaming yellow flood; while mud lying thick on the top of walls and spread over pretty gardens ten feet and more above its present level, with broken trees and shrubs and drift-wood of every kind, showed how terrific a reality our evil-dream storm had been two days ago.

At Remoulins, which is only half-an-hour from Nîmes, a little waggonette was waiting to take us to the Pont du Gard, which lies about two miles up the Gardon. And to my deep satisfaction I found we were the only passengers; for the idea of a herd of tourists at the Pont du Gard was unthinkable.

Crossing the angry Gardon by a long suspension bridge, we drove up the valley along a shady white road planted with the usual plane-trees, close under an arid hill on the left covered with evergreen oak scrub, and on the right a low dusty hedge, scarlet with the ripe berries of the climbing asparagus, between the road and vineyards which stretched down towards the river sadly muddy from the storm. But the vintagers were hard at work despite the mud; women were gathering the grapes into red-brown baskets, men

emptying them from the baskets into the great two-handled wooden tubs we saw at Valence, which they lifted upon long narrow carts and drove away to the press as soon as the load was complete. The vintage is a fascinating spectacle anywhere; and here in Provence it is singularly picturesque. While part of its charm is the knowledge that machinery can never take the place of hand labour in this most ancient and famous of all industries—that, as in the days of the Psalmist or the Classic poet, the vine, the fig-tree and the olive, can never be subjected to the indignity of American “reapers and binders”: but must “yield their fruits of increase” only in response to the hand of man, who tends them and gathers their lovely fruits as did the husbandman in the far-off days before history was made.

Along the white road we trotted leisurely, the valley gradually narrowing, the trees growing thicker, the vineyards fewer until they became a mere strip below the road. And as we drew nearer to our goal the wooded hills closed in on either side of the river, and above the tall trees a quarter of a mile ahead a vision of great arches appeared and vanished as we turned into the yard behind the little Hôtel-Restaurant Servièrre—the

only human habitation in sight, save a far-away mill down the Gardon.

I knew beforehand that this was to be a crowning day of delight to all the six weeks; for ever since my earliest youth I had heard my father and mother speak of the Pont du Gard as a thing of wonder, and I longed intensely to behold it. Therefore, now that it was here close at hand, I was determined not to rush hastily on the supreme moment, but to approach it quietly, respectfully, in as deliberate and leisurely a fashion as the rest of the leisurely journey. Happily we had time and to spare before us; and as it was already long past noon we settled ourselves at one of the many little tables outside the restaurant under a vast shady trellis thickly covered with vines and roses, where we unpacked our luncheon to the sound of the angry unseen Gardon rushing down beyond the grove of splendid evergreen oak, hornbeam, and Falabréguié across the road. But here we found more company than we had bargained for, as a fine bulldog advanced to make friends, and in a moment we were surrounded by a whole menagerie, headed by a large black-and-white Newfoundland—foolish and affectionate—and a gigantic animal whose local use we guessed at once, for he was one of the

huge, smooth-skinned bulldogs, as tall as a foxhound, used among the great herds of cattle on the Camargue. Then a hen came begging, who picked bread so greedily and roughly from my hand that I cried for mercy; two cats joined the party; and ducks quacked loudly the other side of the trellis for their share of good things. The only human guests were a fine old priest with a friend, and a pair of French tourists, who were all mightily diverted at the attentions lavished upon us by the menagerie. And as they had all come by the earlier train and had already made their pilgrimage, we set out on ours absolutely alone. For here, most happily for those who like Mr Kipling's cat love to "walk alone, all in their own lone wild," there are no guides. Madame, who was busily fashioning dainty balls and baskets and bouquets with wild lavender and coloured ribbons, told us that "when we should desire to mount on high" we should find a little footpath on the left before we reached the bridge, "*qui monte à travers les broussaille.*"

I had expected much. But when at the turn of the wide white road among the trees the Pont du Gard stood revealed in all its solemn grandeur, the reality so far exceeded my utmost expectations that I stood awestruck.



The Pont du Gard.

The amazing structure itself, standing as it has stood for near 2000 years, majestic and aloof in the solitude of its lonely valley against the intensely blue sky; the beauty of the wooded hillsides it unites; the rapid river foaming through its lower arcades and over the rocks at their base; the deep blue shadows of the giant arches; the transparent clarity of the atmosphere; the brilliant hot sunshine turning its ancient stone to pale pure gold;—it was all so perfect a whole, without one jarring note, one discordant tone, that we gazed and gazed, speechless in wonder and enchantment, hypnotized, fascinated.

Not a soul was in sight; not a sound to be heard save the rush of the river, the twitter of birds, the busy merry music of cigales rejoicing in the heat and light. And even these sounds did not come to our consciousness at first.

It was only after a time—I know not how long—that one began to wake up to the present, that one's brain began to work again, that contemplation was gradually transformed into observation, and the mind slowly grew eager to grasp details. And, still somewhat amazed, we went forward, and stood half-awed on the bridge itself under one of the gigantic arches of the middle tier, and dimly realized those colossal blocks of stone that

form them. But presently, in a crack between two of these huge, uncemented blocks at the base of one of the piles, a new flower caught our eyes, a bright yellow flower something like the yellow, winter-flowering jessamine, with hard slender stems and whorls of sparse, heath-like leaves—and we were both wide-awake again, once more on the solid and wonderful earth of everyday life—with new plants to find on the hillside, and the marvellous work of those Master-builders—the Romans of 19 B.C.—under our feet. So we searched about for the “*petit sentier qui monte en-haut*” of which Madame had told us, and found it at last, leading up among the low forest beside the bridge. Enchanting little path I shall always remember you with affection, though we scrambled up you slipping and tumbling at every step over the stones that the storm had washed down. For you led us upwards through brushwood such as we had never seen before, of evergreen oak, and myrtle and juniper, and many more delightful unknown shrubs covered with berries black and purple, red and yellow, all wreathed and tangled with the honeysuckle of our English hedges, side by side with the glossy triangular leaves, prickly stems and tiny star flowers of the great southern smilax, and long

trails hung with scarlet berries of the climbing asparagus, that we grow at home in greenhouses and miscall "Asparagus fern." Every bush and every flower seemed to give forth pungent aromatic scents under the blazing sun, filling the air with fresh fragrance as we followed the path right under the head of the last great arch of the middle tier, built into the steep slope of the hill. On the further side there was a little open turfy space among low bushes of heath, juniper, and broom, and panting we flung ourselves down to rest. But how could we rest when the close turf was gemmed with the blossoms of a small, pale mauve Autumn crocus and a tiny *Ixia*-like purple flower a couple of inches high? Heat, fatigue, and for a moment even the Pont du Gard itself, were forgotten as we dug out the little bulbs with the points of our parasols, and filled our hands, full already to overflowing, with our new-found treasures. (N.B.—Mine were unfortunately lost on the homeward journey: but S. has several specimens flourishing in a pot at the present moment.)

A scarcely perceptible track now led yet further up the steep hill through thick brushwood; and in a moment more we had reached the upper arcade of the great bridge, and entering by a rent

stood in the actual aqueduct at the point where it enters the depths of the hill—a black round tunnel on our right cut through the rock itself, which carried the waters on to Nîmes, while on the left the conduit of the aqueduct stretched away narrow, dark, mysterious, the whole length of the marvellous bridge.

We stood for a moment hesitating as to what to do, wondering whether it would be possible to walk through the dark narrow course of the aqueduct itself, when the utter stillness was broken by a dog's loud bark close by as a handsome golden setter dashed out of the bushes, and a man, gun in hand, burst through the dense copse just above where we stood with a shout. As he evidently did not see us, and as his gun was pointing exactly in our direction, I thought it prudent to shout too! and cried, "*Peut-on passer par là, Monsieur?*" pointing along the aqueduct. "*Oui, oui, Madame, allez jusqu'au bout,*" came the civil answer from the sportsman, as much startled at our apparition as we were at his. And thus encouraged we set forth upon our singular walk.

The aqueduct itself is the only part of the Pont du Gard in which cement is used—the actual conduit, which is shaped like the letter U, being lined with fine Roman cement. It is two feet in

width—narrower in some places from a calcareous deposit from the water—and covered by flat slabs of stone laid across the coping without cement or mortar. These covering slabs extend along the greater part of the aqueduct, with breaks in places where they have been destroyed; so that the conduit is not in total darkness. It looked, however, so dark and so low before we entered, that I wondered whether we should have to creep half double along the whole 882 feet. But one had long lost all sense of proportion with regard to the enormous structure; and great was my surprise to find that I could walk the whole length bolt upright without the top of my hat once touching the covering slabs; therefore allowing 5 feet 8 for myself, plus two or three inches of hat, the slabs must have been close upon 6 feet above the bottom of the conduit.

It was a curious journey along those 882 feet. Little pools of water still lay in spots to which the sun could not penetrate. The inevitable yellow *Chieranthus*, grey-mauve sage and wild mint, clung to cracks between the huge blocks of the coping. And where this was broken away in places, we managed by standing up on tiptoe to look out over the wall of the conduit on the enchanting view—on the Gardon itself, 160 feet

below us ; then up the richly wooded gorge to the graceful turn it takes half a mile above the bridge among the hills ; and down its course over miles of undulating country ; while on a sun-bathed slope two miles below, the scars of the quarry from which the colossal stones we leant against had been hewn nearly 2000 years ago, still shone out like pale gold. We were in doubt whether it would be possible to descend "au bout" as the sportsman suggested, or whether we must return the same way ; for we knew that the last arch at the end was broken down. But our questionings were speedily answered when we reached the end ; for in 1855 the Government constructed a winding stairway in the thickness of the pile of the broken arch, which let us out level with the top of the arches in the middle tier, upon the steep rocky hillside on the left bank of the Gardon. And there among the junipers and other deliciously fragrant shrubs growing among the rocks and stones, we thankfully sat down in the shadow cast by the great bridge to rest and gather up our somewhat bewildered senses, as we gazed our fill upon the wonderful structure. For here we could look closely at its construction, nay, even touch the gigantic blocks if we had a mind to do so.

Built nineteen years before the birth of Christ, it is supposed to have been the work of Agrippa, son-in-law of Augustus and "perpetual curator of waterworks." It consists of three tiers of arches, six large ones forming the lower arcade in the bed of the river which flows through the central ones; eleven of the same size in the middle tier; and thirty-five smaller ones above which carry the actual conduit. And despite its 1900 years, and many mutilations by Visigoths of the 5th century, and barbarians of the 17th who cut through part of the piles of the middle arcade to make a roadway for travellers and a passage for the Duc de Rohan's artillery, it is still perfect, and might serve its original purpose to-day if the broken arch were repaired.

One hundred and sixty feet in height above the river and 882 feet in length from hill to hill, the effect of the Pont du Gard is far more striking and impressive than any of the other splendid monuments the Romans left in Gaul. How it can have been built at all, how those enormous blocks can have been raised without any of the mechanical appliances of modern construction, and fitted so perfectly without a touch of cement, fills one with wonder, especially in the curve of the great arches, consisting of three ribs side

by side of blocks, which when measured roughly proved each to be about five-and-a-half feet long by two deep. And one's admiration for the masterful enterprise of those Roman builders who no obstacle could hinder, grows all the deeper when one remembers that they flung this gigantic bridge—as we miscall it—nearly 900 feet across a rocky gorge in the wild forest, not for the purpose of a bridge, but merely to carry water from twenty-five miles away to their city of Nîmes. That they intended their work to last for all time is evident. For the square blocks which jut out in many places, as may be seen in the illustrations, are intended to support scaffold poles in case the great aqueduct might need repair. And on the other hand we see how careless they were of effect so long as their purpose was accomplished, by the fact that the span of many of the arches is of different width, and that the whole structure is not straight but takes a decided curve in the middle. Yet as we gaze on it to-day, the rugged severity of the design and the utter absence of any decoration only make it the more magnificent and impressive.

Even so, I hardly think I should have quite realised the gigantic proportions of the Pont du Gard, if a wayfaring man had not appeared



ARCH OF MIDDLE TIER. PONT DU GARD

beneath our rocky perch and made his weary way along the broad roadway, that was added in 1743 against the eastern side of the Roman building level with the base of the middle arcade, to carry the main road from Uzès to Beaucaire. And as he reached the further end, he seemed to have dwindled to the stature of one of the big black ants that hurried on urgent business among the stones close to our feet.

The rocks and stones on that rocky hillside were somewhat hard seats : but it was a delicious resting-place all the same ; for there were junipers and unknown shrubs growing among the stones that gave off aromatic savours which filled the whole air. One especially, growing like a dwarf cupressus in a small round bush and covered with little dark berries, was so fragrant that we picked bunches of it which kept their scent for weeks. The handsome smilax too found root-hold among the stones, and its long climbing stems and tiny sweet-scented white flowers clung to the nearest shrubs in a prickly tangle.

Slowly and reluctantly at last we left our rocky hillside and went down to the road, where we tried to catch the big cigales that whirred away before us like brown humming-birds, and picked

wild figs, which burnt my lips, from the bushes that clung to cracks in the venerable masonry. Yet more slowly and reluctantly we made our lingering way across the great bridge, fain to allow every arch, every stone, every exquisite turn of the rushing river in its wooded valley framed in the openings of the vast arcade, to fix themselves for ever in our memories. And when at last the evergreen oaks and graceful Falabréguié hid the great Pont du Gard from our eyes, and we left it alone in its solitary majesty, it was with the pang of leaving some precious and inspiring presence, and we knew that the long-desired and delectable day was over.

CHAPTER XXIII

FAREWELL TO THE SOUTH

OUR last evening at Nîmes was spent in the Amphitheatre, just as the hot sun was setting in a cloudless sky and turning the pale golden stone to rose-colour. We clambered from one huge block of the gradins to another, and made our way along the upper corridor above them, and marvelled at the cyclopean slabs of its vault some 18 feet in length, many of them cracked either by earthquake or by sheer weight of the mass of stone that rested upon them. This was our farewell to the work of the Romans in Gaul. But marvellous as it was, the Pont du Gard had so filled our minds, so utterly satisfied our imaginations, that we could think and speak of little else. And as we looked back on all that we had seen in these six golden weeks, theatres and amphitheatres, temples and triumphal arches all sank into the background before the memory of that stately lonely aqueduct spanning the rapid river in the silence of its wooded valley.

The journey next day up the right bank of the Rhône to Lyons was of singular beauty and interest. Though infinitely slow—for the trains are few and stop at nearly every station—it is a far more picturesque route than the ordinary one down the left bank. The line runs between the river and the long range of limestone mountains that form an almost continuous wall close to the west bank of the river—outlying spurs of the Cevennes, succeeded by the mountains of the Coiran, the Vivarais, the Mont Pilat, and the Lyonnais. And the fact of their lower slopes being covered with vineyards, now in all the gay charm of the vintage, adds greatly to their beauty.

Our route as far as Remoulins was the same as that of the previous day. Then turning sharply to the east the line reached the Rhône once more at Aramon after our three days' absence from its ever welcome presence, and we soon got a superb view of Avignon and of the Fort St. André with Mt Ventoux behind them. It was a joy to behold again the beautiful city I had grown to know so well; and as we steamed out of Villeneuve-les-Avignon, and caught a last sight of the Palais des Papes and the Rocher des Doms bathed in sun, over umbrella pines and rich gardens behind the great Fort which lay near by

in shadow, I felt as if I was saying good-bye to an old—if strangely mysterious and somewhat fateful—friend.

Many tunnels through the mountains which lie so close to the Rhône succeeded one another for some distance. But we were able to get a good view of Roquemaure with its ruined castle. Castles indeed—nearly all of them in ruins—abounded the whole way, crowning every crest, or cliff, or rock, till it became difficult to disentangle them even with the help of map and guide books. And while, beyond Bagnols and its coal-mines, one was engrossed with the great ruined château de Gicors on a lofty escarpement close at hand, one's attention was soon distracted by the ruins of Montdragon on the further bank of the Rhône above Orange, and tragic Mornas, both near together on precipitous cliffs, from the last of which the terrible Baron des Adrets—the Huguenot iconoclast who wrought such havoc along the valley of the Rhône in every Church and Cathedral—forced his prisoners to leap down on the pikes of his soldiers below.

But gentler memories came when we stopped at Pont St. Esprit. For here, though alas! I could not see it from the train, is the great bridge across the Rhône, which the Frères

pontifes built soon after they had finished the Pont d'Avignon. It was the last work of this useful confraternity. Begun in 1265, and finished thirty years later, 2717 yards long, with twenty-two round-headed arches, it forms a sort of elbow against the strong current of the river. And having been more carefully treated by the abbots Cluny in whose jurisdiction it lay, and less exposed to the hazards of war than was the Pont St. Benezet, it has withstood the violences of the Rhône to this day. The little town is a place one would like to explore at leisure ; for besides its bridge, which for long years was the only permanent one across the Rhône between Lyons and Avignon, and its citadel built by Louis XIII., it has two interesting churches, the old Romanesque church of the St. Esprit, and the Gothic St. Saturnin, separated by a little *place*, which has a handsome balcony overlooking the quay and is approached by two stairways.

But many were the spots at which I longed to make a halt of a few hours along this line. Bourg St. Andéol was one, with remains of mediæval fortifications and a fine Romanesque 12th century church of which one only got a passing glimpse from the train. Viviers-sur-Rhône was another—the ancient capital of the

Vivarais—for as we travelled down from Valence to Avignon, we had seen enough even from the express to make one long to explore its fine cathedral perched high upon a steep fortified rock rising out of the Rhône ; and now close at hand it appeared more striking and attractive than ever.

But above all other tantalizing visions was that of Rochemaure—a veritable town of troglodytes as it seemed—houses, castle, fortifications all apparently carved out of the dust-coloured limestone and dark basalt of the mountain—so that rock and buildings, one in colour, appeared to be one in substance. A more curious place—reminding one in a way of one of those strange pueblos of the Zuñi Indians in New Mexico—it would be hard to find. The donjon on an isolated and precipitous basalt rock several hundred feet high, was once joined to the rest of the castle by bridges across the intervening ravines. The remains of battlemented ramparts and towers surround the ruined castle ; while a background of lofty cliffs with black dykes of basalt running through the limestone, complete the weird effect. The castle, built on the last spur of the mountains of the Coiran, belonged first to the Comtes Adhèmar and later to the famous family of Rohan-Soubise;

and in the 16th century it served as a refuge for the Catholics, who were here several times besieged in vain by the Protestants and the terrible Baron des Adrets. But as the last Lord of Rochemaure revolted against Louis XIII., the king put an end to his rebellion by taking and partially destroying his castle. A mile or more to the west of Rochemaure, lies the extinct volcano of Chenavari, with a fine basalt causeway which the country people call the *Pavé des Geants*; and from the flat plateau which covers the old crater it is said that there is a magnificent view over the Vivarais and Dauphiné, which I can well believe.

Cruas is another tempting spot; for here instead of a castle we get a fortified abbey on a hill, with ramparts, towers, gates, and a donjon whose ground floor contains an interesting chapel. It was twice besieged by the Protestants, and twice the valiant abbot and his monks successfully drove off their assailants. The church belonging to the little village is at the base of the hill below the road, and is a remarkable example of 12th century Romanesque in the form of a Latin cross, with a crypt containing the monument of the Count Adhémar who founded Rochemaure.

The land between the foot of these mountains and the Rhône is richly cultivated; quince bushes covered with fruit are planted along every ditch, fruit trees grow among the crops, with endless mulberries. And as we stopped at the little wayside station of Charmes, I was amused to see a man perched in the branches of a mulberry tree with a huge sack, which he was filling with the green leaves for a late lot of his silkworms.

As we neared St. Péray we got magnificent views across the Rhône of the mountains of the Drôme, with the strange bent point of Roche-courbe standing out among them. Valence shone white on its plateau above the river in the hot afternoon sun, as we halted for a moment below Cruzol at the little St. Péray station, whose platform was heaped with scores of new red-brown grape baskets, which made us long for a glass of sparkling St. Péray from those cool cellars of charming Madame Milliand half a mile away up the valley. And now it was a case not of "roses, roses, all the way," but vines. For the hillsides on the left of the railway were terraced with vines for the rest of our journey as far as St. Colombe and Vienne.

At Sarras the first red roof instead of the

brown tiles of the south was a little shock ; for it reminded me that we were indeed on our way to the cool, calm north. But though we had left Provence with all its many charms behind us, we had by no means parted from Tartarin de Tarascon. As we started from Nîmes in the morning he was the last to bid us bon voyage. For when we had made our weary way up the long flights of stairs and reached the platform—crowded with soldiers dispersing after the manœuvres—the sous-chef de gare rushed up to me, seized my hand, shook it warmly, inquired eagerly how I did, and before I could recover from my utter amazement he had rushed off to other friends. As I had only asked him some simple question when we were starting the day before for the Pont du Gard, our acquaintance seemed hardly on so exuberant and intimate a footing ; and I could but imagine he had taken me for some one else. But no ! When the train came up, there was the good man back again, to hustle the porter and see that we had a compartment all to ourselves in the corridor ; and when we were settled to his satisfaction he lingered on the step, hanging on by the door, and then out came the reason of this sudden and rather puzzling affection.

"I am so happy to see Madame!"—

I looked bewildered!—

"Madame is English!"

I assented.

"I have a daughter in England—in London—an *institutrice*. She has been there for two years, and she loves well England." And as the train slowly drew out of the station, he still walked by the carriage wishing us every good on our journey.

Yet even so we were not yet quit of the Southern temperament. Two typical Tartarins, stout, black-bearded, effervescent, had ensconced themselves in the next compartment with a gigantic basket—no! hamper—of provisions to beguile the time on their journey to Lyons. Their resounding voices grew louder and louder as the contents of the hamper diminished, till at last in the afternoon, as we approached St. Colombe opposite Vienne and ran close under the famous vineyards on the slopes of Mont Pilat with their huge notice boards, we were electrified by a perfect yell from the corridor.

"Té! Peau de chien! Voilà la Côte Rôtie!"

It was pleasant to find choice flowers on my dinner-table when, rather weary, we reached Lyons; for curiously enough Provence is by no

means a land of flowers ; and except the little China roses and oleanders which the good gardien of the Chartreuse gave me at Villeneuve-les-Avignon, I had never been able to lay hands on any flowers save wild ones all through the south, and had begun to feel sadly hungry for them. It was pleasant too, to see the white habits and wide-winged caps of the good nursing sisters in Church of the Hôtel Dieu ;—to go up to Fourvières again ;—to spend another afternoon among the roses, now in all the glory of their autumn bloom, at Villeurbanne, and drink tea with charming Mademoiselle and the little black-and-white pie-dogs. Pleasant above all, to watch the rapid and turbulent Rhône once more, as it hurried along between its plane-planted quays.

But there must be an end to all pleasant things. And now, as the Paris express thunders in from the south and the cities along your banks wherein I have spent such golden hours, farewell for awhile, fierce and noble river that I love. And may it be my happy fate to see you again ere long.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

SUGGESTIONS FOR AN AUTOMOBILE TOUR IN PROVENCE

I CANNOT imagine a more delightful three or four weeks' tour for the happy owner of an automobile, than an unhurried journey down the Rhône from Lyons ; making Valence, Avignon, and Arles the chief centres from which to visit countless spots of varied interest that lie in that vast plain watered by the Rhône and its tributary the Durance, between the Alps of Dauphiné and the Cevennes. The roads are perfect. And now, thanks to the good offices of the Automobile Club de France, a great transformation has taken place in provincial hotels, and one is secure of finding in all those on its list modern sanitation, good bathrooms, and all reasonable comfort.

In the hope, therefore, of inducing others to visit this beautiful and attractive part of France, which now, as in past centuries, preserves a character completely its own, and is rich in unique monuments of the Roman occupation as well as

those of mediæval times, I have sketched out a tour not only to the places I visited during my little journey, but to various others which time and circumstance prevented my seeing.

LYONS.

As I have shown (see p. 21), Lyons makes an admirable point of departure for such a tour—a sort of introduction to the Roman and Mediæval architecture of Dauphiné and Provence ; while in itself the city is full of interest, and is practically as unknown to the vast majority of travellers in France as it was to me till last August. In fact before I went there I only found one friend who had ever stayed in Lyons for more than a night. But with a diplomatic experience of all the capitals of Europe, her admiration of the “magnificent and beautiful city” was so great that I became eager to see it for myself.

The Grand Nouvel Hôtel on the Quai de l'Hôpital and Rue Grollée is excellent, quiet and comfortable, with first-rate garage.

After visiting the city itself, excursions may be made on the west bank of the Saône to l'Île Barbe ; to the Mont d'Or with its charming Italian-like villas embowered in trees and gardens ; and to the heights of St. Irenée, the Demi Lune, St.

Foy, and La Mulatière, close to the junction of the Rhône and the Saône. On the east bank of the Rhône, to the delightful Parc de la Tête d'Or, but automobiles are not admitted here ; and the famous rose-gardens of Bernaix at Villeurbanne, Guillot and Schwartz at Montplaisir, and Pernet-Ducher at Vennissieux.

LYONS TO VALENCE (65 miles).

In leaving Lyons, the right (west) bank of the Rhône is distinctly preferable to the left (east) bank for an automobile journey ; for the road follows the Rhône closely on the right bank, while on the left it leaves the river for many miles, running through uninteresting outskirts of the city among railway works, factories, &c., for a considerable distance. And besides this, another great advantage of taking the road on the right bank is, that as the Rhône is closely guarded by lofty hills on the west for the greater part of its course from Lyons to Tarascon, the road is in shade most of the afternoon.

Crossing the Pont de Tilsit we follow the quays along the Saône by the fine road under St. Foy, and past its junction with the Rhône. Beyond black *Givors* (13 miles) and its glass-works, the mountains begin to close in, and the scenery

becomes very striking. As the valley turns, *Vienne* appears across the river. And at *St. Colombe* we cross the Rhône by a suspension bridge, on the site of the Roman stone bridge which was swept away by flood in the 17th century, to

Vienne (19 miles).

Hôtel du Nord, good food, but not a place to stay in (see p. 52). Two to three hours will suffice to visit the chief points of interest here.

Recrossing the suspension bridge, with Philippe de Valois' great tower as a *tête de pont*, the road now runs under the Mont Pilat and the famous vineyards of the Côte Rôtie. The scenery here is very fine, the valley narrowing to a mere gorge in places, between lofty hills whose lower slopes are covered with vineyards. There are good views also across the river of *Rousillon*, *St. Vallier*, and the singular hill of the *Hermitage* vineyards.

Passing *Serrières*, *Andance*, and *Sarras*, we reach *Tournon* (55 miles), in a most picturesque situation. A fine view may be had from the ancient castle on a precipitous rock rising out of the Rhône; behind which is the 14th century Church of St. Julien.

The valley of the Isère now opens out across

the Rhône; and from *Châteaubourg*, a castle perched on a rock beside the river, at which St. Louis stayed on his way to the crusades in 1248, a magnificent view is to be had on clear days right up the valley of the Isère to Mt Blanc.

St. Péray (see p. 81) is now reached, and we again cross the Rhône to

VALENCE.

Grand Hôtel de la Croix d'Or, excellent in all ways.

This is a good centre for several excursions.

St. Péray and its wine cellars, the Cornes de Cruzol and the Château de Beauregard will take an afternoon. A longer and interesting expedition may be made *viâ* St. Péray to *Lamastre* in the picturesque valley of Le Doux, thence to *Le Cheylard*, among the mountains of Vivarais, returning down the valley of l'Érieux. By taking the road along which the steam tram runs from Valence to the south-east, a picturesque region below the range of Le Vercors is reached, with many quaint and interesting villages.

An expedition up the valley of the Isère to *Grenoble* (61 miles), is one of the most beautiful that can be made in France, sleeping at Grenoble, where there are many excellent hotels.

VALENCE TO MONTÉLIMAR (30 miles).

The whole route is extremely picturesque, the road still closely following the Rhône, with fine views eastwards of the mountains of the Drôme. Below St. Péray, and on the same line of limestone crags as Cruzol, is the ruined *Château de Soyons*; and further on, beyond *Baix*, the very interesting fortified *Abbey of Cruas* is well worth a visit; as is the remarkable 12th century Romanesque church below it, half buried under debris from the hills above. While just opposite Montélimar is one of the most picturesque spots on the Rhône—*Rochemaure*, at the base of a precipitous limestone and basalt hill, which is crowned by the ancient castle of the Soubise family. And about a mile to the west, the extinct volcano of Chenavari and a fine basalt causeway are to be seen (see p. 273).

Here we cross the Rhône by a suspension bridge to

MONTÉLIMAR,

where at the Hôtel de la Poste a comfortable stay may be made for a day or two. This is the best point from which to visit the *Château*

de Grignan (17 miles S.E.), the home of Mme de Sévigné, grandly situated in the midst of charming scenery, returning by *St. Paul Trois Châteaux* with a fine 12th century Romanesque cathedral and many Roman remains, and *Pierrelatte*.

Dieulefit is also well worthy of a visit, on account of its admirable position on the Jabron in the midst of a mountain gorge.

MONTÉLIMAR TO AVIGNON (49 miles).

Leaving Montélimar by the west bank, about 6 miles down the Rhône we reach *Viviers-sur-Rhône*, the picturesque ancient capital of the Vivarais, with its cathedral, whose tower dates from the early 12th century, standing in a fortified enceinte on a steep rock above the Rhône; while many old houses, especially the *Hôtel de Noë*, are of interest.

Bourg-St.-Andéol, a few miles on, also possesses a fine Romanesque church and remains of fortifications. And about 20 miles from Montélimar we reach *Pont St. Esprit*, with the famous bridge built by St. Benezet and his frères pontifes (see p. 117), across the Rhône. The little town has a citadel of 1595-1627, and two churches—the fine Romanesque church of the St. Esprit with a dome, and the Gothic St. Saturnin, separated by

a little *place* with two stairways, and a balcony overhanging the quay.

From this point the road leaves the Rhône for some miles, running inland *viâ* Bagnols, to avoid the precipitous mountains along its course through which the railroad is carried by long tunnels. At Laudun it again approaches the river and follows it closely past *Roquemaure* with its ruined castle. In a few miles we get the first glimpse of *Avignon*, and soon reach *Villeneuve-les-Avignon*, and crossing the Île Barthelasse and the two branches of the Rhône by the long bridges, enter

AVIGNON

by the Porte de l'Oulle, close to which in the Place Crillon, is the excellent Grand Hôtel de l'Europe with a spacious garage. (See p. 90.)

Avignon is the natural centre for endless excursions far and near. That to *Villeneuve-les-Avignon* with its interesting church, the Charreusse and the Fort St. André, and a visit to the famous vineyards of Châteauneuf des Papes, will take a whole and most enjoyable afternoon, while, as I have shown, the city itself will give occupation for many days. The following distant excursions, except where indicated, will each fill a whole day.

I. AVIGNON TO ORANGE AND VAISON.

Orange.

Several roads lead to *Orange* (18 miles), (see p. 143). And after seeing the Arc de Triomphe, the theatre, the circus, and other points of interest in the town, which is some 3 miles east of the Rhône, a good road leads north-east 15 miles to *Vaison*.

This is a most picturesque spot, and here the finest antiquities in the Musée Calvet have been found, as it was a rich and prosperous Roman settlement (see p. 132). The lower town is built on the rocky banks of the Ouvèze, spanned by a single arch Roman bridge. The upper town is piled on the rocky height above, reached by a winding road built up the face of the rock with terraces and ramparts and lofty houses clinging to the cliff-like hill; and is entered through an ancient gateway. Here among narrow streets of old houses and curious archways and passages, we find the Château, the old Romanesque cathedral with an 11th to 13th century cloister, and the 12th century Romanesque church of St. Quenin with a triangular apse. The square belfry of the cathedral is surmounted by

a bell in an ironwork cage, after the fashion of the country.

The return to Avignon may be made round the slopes of Mt Ventoux *viâ Malucène* and *Carpentras* (see next excursion).

2. AVIGNON TO CARPENTRAS AND MT VENTOUX.

The most interesting route is *viâ Pernes*, which is still partly enclosed by ancient walls, three of whose gates exist. Here we find a Romanesque church and many old and picturesque buildings, such as the "Halle" with a deep tiled roof on square pillars. The great square tower of what once was the château of the Comtes de Toulouse, surmounted by an elaborate iron cage for the bell, dominates the curious little town.

Carpentras is a well-to-do town, the buildings on a rather large scale, with plenty of space and shady avenues instead of the old ramparts; though portions of the walls and towers remain, and the very fine Porte d'Orange, on the same plan as the gates of Avignon, is in perfect preservation. As it was the important Roman station of *Carpentoracte*, many antiquities have been found here: but the only Roman building is a small but fine triumphal arch in the court of

the Palais de Justice. The cathedral St. Siffrien is a 16th century building, but the tower is of the 10th century. Many fine houses and richly decorated doorways abound. A Museum with good antiquities and a good collection of books, is due to the Trappist bishop of Carpentras in the 18th century, who enriched the town in various ways; and the charming Fontaine de l'Ange is of that same date.

Seven miles south-east of Carpentras lies *Venasque*, where there is an interesting 8th century circular baptistery.

From Carpentras the ascent of *Le Mont Ventoux* is made *viâ Bédoin*: and from the summit, 6461 feet, a magnificent view is obtained; in clear weather it is even possible to see the Mediterranean.

3. AVIGNON TO VAUCLUSE.

A whole day may well be devoted to *Vaucluse*, not merely for its famous associations with Petrarch, but for the sake of its singularly picturesque situation.

A good road leads thither through *Le Thor*, where there is a Romanesque church and old ramparts. Thence to *L'Isle sur Sorgues*, a charming little manufacturing town, threaded by

many branches of the Sorgues which in places run under the houses; there are some good pictures by the two Mignards, Parrocel, and Vouet, in the 17th century church.

Four miles up the valley of the Sorgues we reach *Vaucluse*, a pretty village with quaint old houses, archways, &c., at the mouth of the gorge where the celebrated "fontaine"—the Sorgues itself—flows from the base of precipitous rocks, dominated by the ancient castle where dwelt Petrarch's friend, Cardinal de Cabassol.

4. AVIGNON TO CAVAILLON, ORGON, NOVES, CHÂTEAURENARD.

To reach *Cavaillon*, the old posting road to Aix is taken, which follows the Durance closely the whole way.

Cavaillon lies on the north of the Durance, in the midst of *jardins potagers* which supply Avignon with its excellent vegetables and fruit. The old Romanesque cathedral, St. Véran, restored in 1251, possesses a remarkable apse and a cloister of very ancient arcades. There is also part of a small triumphal arch below the hill of St. Jacques, of which only two mutilated arches remain.

Crossing the Durance, some 3 or 4 miles by a pleasant road leads to *Orgon*, behind which rise the ragged and fantastic crests of the Alpines. The little town is singularly picturesque, and is entered by an ancient gateway, with houses built into the solid rock, and ruined ramparts. The principal street of very old and lofty houses runs straight through from one gate to the other. A narrow steep *ruelle* leads up through a pointed gateway to the very ancient château, which was ruined in the time of Louis XIII.

Noves, the home of Petrarch's Laura, lies on the homeward road from Orgon, and is still enclosed in its mediæval ramparts with their old towers. And a few miles further on the flourishing little town of *Châteaurenard* is reached, charmingly situated among gardens and orchards, and dominated by the two towers of the old castle of the Comtes de Provence. From here the Durance is crossed to Avignon.

5. AVIGNON TO SISTERON AND BRIANÇON.

A longer and very fine excursion of two or three days through magnificent scenery, may be made up the valley of the Durance into the heart of the high Alps of Provence and Dauphiné, as far as Sisteron, Gap, and Embrun; and even further

to the frontier fortress town of Briançon. But this latter part needs summer weather.

The main road is followed to *l'Isle sur Sorgues*; and thence up the Coulon, which is spanned by the fine *Pont Julien* a Roman bridge of three arches, to *Apt*, the *Apta Julia* of the Romans. The 9th or 10th century church here, whose crypt is built on part of a Roman amphitheatre, possesses an interesting 11th century enamelled shrine containing the relics of St. Anne. And the square *Tour de l'Horloge*, with the bell as usual in a rather elaborate iron cage, is the only other object of interest.

The road then passes through *Forcalquier*; and we now find in Provence of the mountains a remarkable contrast to Provence of the plain, and pass many picturesque spots as we join the Durance again at *Les Mees*, a little townlet, with a curious rock formation behind it on the hill at whose foot it lies. *Volonne* is another townlet clustered at the base of a needle-like rock bearing two ancient towers. And the scenery on each side of the river grows finer every mile, till we come to the most singular of all these little towns—*Sisteron*—the ancient fortress guarding the gate of Provence and Dauphiné. The rocky gorge—through which the Durance forces its way between the lofty

piton de La Baume on the east and the citadel on the west, spanned by the single arch of the Roman bridge—is so narrow that there is hardly space beside the river for the roadway and houses piled one above another. The old round towers of its ramparts, built in 1364 by Urbain V. still exist; and one long street of high houses winds up the flank of the rock, through the town and past the 11th century church of Notre Dame to the fine fortified gateway; while the ancient citadel rises above, a veritable stronghold commanding the defile of the Durance, here joined by the Buëch. M. Robida says that seen from the faubourg of La Baume across the river, “l’ensemble formé par le pont, la porte, le roc, et la citadelle est vraiment imposant. . . . La ville semble collée au rocher, suspendue à une grande hauteur au-dessus de la rivière et soutenue par d’énormes massifs de maçonnerie.” The views from various points, such as the *piton de la Baume*, and the *Mollard*, are extremely fine.

As there is no good hotel in Sisteron, it is necessary to go on for the night, through vineyards and admirable scenery, twenty miles to *Gap*, capital of the Dept. des Hautes Alpes, where the Hôtel du Nord is recommended.

Twenty-five miles further up the valley of the

Durance we reach *Embrun*, an interesting old town and fortress. The fine 12th century cathedral with a lofty Romanesque tower, has a lateral portal with pillars of the red marble of the country. The first church here was built by Constantine the Great. The views from the ramparts are very striking.

Mont-Dauphine, 10 miles further on, "the key of the pass into Italy," was fortified by Vauban; and a magnificent view of Mt Pelvoux and its glaciers is obtained from the fort, which is built of pink marble.

From *Embrun*, if the traveller wishes to push on further, the windings of the Durance may be followed, the road running generally high above the river, to *Briançon* (32 miles). This is a first-class fortress, where the Terminus Hôtel, belonging to the P.L.M. Railway, and the Grand Hôtel, are both good.

6. AVIGNON TO TARASCON AND ARLES.

The road follows the line of the railway, as the Rhône makes a wide bend to the west below Avignon.

Barbentane (about 4 miles) has an ancient and interesting church, a town hall with arcades below it, steep narrow streets and old houses; while a

pointed gateway leads into the stronghold with Monsignor de Grimoard's tower (see p. 170).

A mile or two east of *Graveson* is *Maillane*, the home of the poet Mistral.

At *Tarascon* (20 miles), (see p. 171), we again touch the Rhône, and after visiting the cathedral, &c., we cross it to *Beaucaire* (see p. 180). The buffet at the Tarascon Station is fairly good for luncheon.

From Tarascon the fine main road runs to the east of the railway within sight of Les Alpines, through endless vineyards and cornfields, to Arles (9 miles). Or Arles may be reached *viâ* St. Rémy, Les Alpines, and Les Baux. But these places are of such extreme interest that it is well to devote a whole day to them, as indicated below.

ARLES (see p. 184).

Hôtel du Forum in the Place du Forum. Garage. Tourists should insist on having rooms on first, second, or third floors, overlooking the Place du Forum, and on having dinner served hot. Sanitation modern, but service poor. A first-class modern hotel is much needed.

Next to Avignon, this is one of the most interesting centres for excursions, while the charm of the city itself is great.

I. ARLES TO MONTMAJOUR, LES BAUX,
AND ST. RÉMY.

Montmajour (see p. 209) lies 3 miles from Arles along an admirable road through vineyards and cornlands. Thence *viâ Fontvielle* and *Paradou* to *Les Baux*—the weird, ruinate mediæval town, whose houses, churches, towers, and castle are partly cut out of the actual rock of Les Alpines—which belonged to the Princes and Comtes de Baux, one of whom became King of Arles. Here famous Cours d'Amour were held in the time of "le bon roi René." But the later Comtes de Baux proved such troublesome neighbours, that at last Louis XIII. besieged and sacked their stronghold; and since then *Les Baux* has gradually decayed, till the 11th century castle, the 12th century church, the chapel of the Trois Maries, and the many charming Renaissance houses, are all more or less in ruin; and instead of 4000 inhabitants, as in the days of its glory, it now numbers barely 120.

From *Les Baux*, a picturesque road from *Maussane* leads through and over Les Alpines to St. Rémy. And it is well worth while to stop on the way to visit the strange *Val d'Enfer*, whose

cyclopean rocks many believe must have suggested to Dante, who it is known stayed at Arles, the gorge in the *Inferno* :

“In su l'estremita d'un alta ripa
Che facevan gran pietre rotte in cerchio,”

and also the *Trou des Fées*, which plays so formidable a part in Mistral's *Mirèio* (see p. 214).

St. Rémy, the Roman *Glanum*, is a charming town surrounded by boulevards of good trees, and it possesses two very remarkable Roman monuments. The first is a most interesting triumphal arch, of which the upper part is unhappily destroyed. But the finely carved vault, and the beautiful archivolt—a garland of fruits, leaves, ivy, olive branches and grapes entwined—are still perfect ; while in the bas-reliefs, bound captives and women beside them may be seen, between the Corinthian pillars bereft of capitals. Close beside it stands a fine and perfectly preserved sepulchral monument about 50 feet high. Its square base decorated with bas-reliefs, supports a four-arched storey surmounted by a circular, domed colonnade ; and the inscription says that it was erected by Sextus, Lucius, and Marius of the family of the Julii, to their parents. In the town of *St. Rémy* the old house may still be seen in which the

famous astrologer, Nostradamus, was born in 1503.

The return journey of 18 miles may be made to Arles by *Mas Blanc* and *Segonnaux*.

2. ARLES TO AIX EN PROVENCE (two days).

The great road to Marseilles (see p. 238) is followed across the plain of the Crau for 24 miles to *Salon*, a little town famous for its considerable trade in olive oil and almond paste, and also as the scene in June 1909, of the severe earthquake which nearly destroyed it. At *St. Cannat* the road joins that from Avignon, and thence through hilly country to *Aix*, where there are excellent hotels.

The return journey may be made *viâ Velaux*, along the north of the Étang de Berre to the singular town of *St. Chamas*, part of whose old ramparts remain. And close by is the fine *Pont Flavien*, a Roman bridge of a single arch of huge blocks across the Touloubre, approached by arches of Corinthian architecture at either end of the roadway. "It is a very perfect specimen of its class, and of singular elegance in form."—(Murray.)

The road thence runs about 23 miles across

the vast plain of the Crau, *viâ Miramas* and *Entressen* to Arles.

3. ARLES TO THE SAINTES MARIES.

The *Saintes Maries*, on the Mediterranean (see p. 173), is about 23 miles from Arles, through the Camargue—a most interesting excursion. But I do not know whether the road is possible for automobiles. If it is not, the simplest way would be by train from Arles.

4. ARLES *viâ* ST. GILLES TO NÎMES.

Crossing the Grand Rhône to Trinquetaille, the road runs across the Camargue, crosses the Petit Rhône and the Canal de Beaucaire at *La Camargue*, and reaches *St. Gilles* in 12 miles. Here the church with its famous triple portal, finer even than that of St. Trophime, is of extreme interest. There is also a good view from the Hôtel de Ville, and one or two interesting 12th century houses in the town.

A good road leads thence 12 miles to Nîmes.

NÎMES.

Grand Hôtel du Luxembourg, first-class (see p. 236).

NÎMES TO THE PONT DU GARD.

About 15 miles *viâ* Gervassy and Remoulins (see p. 255).

The Pont du Gard is about the same distance from Avignon, to which a fine road leads from Remoulins. And the return journey may be made by this route.

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